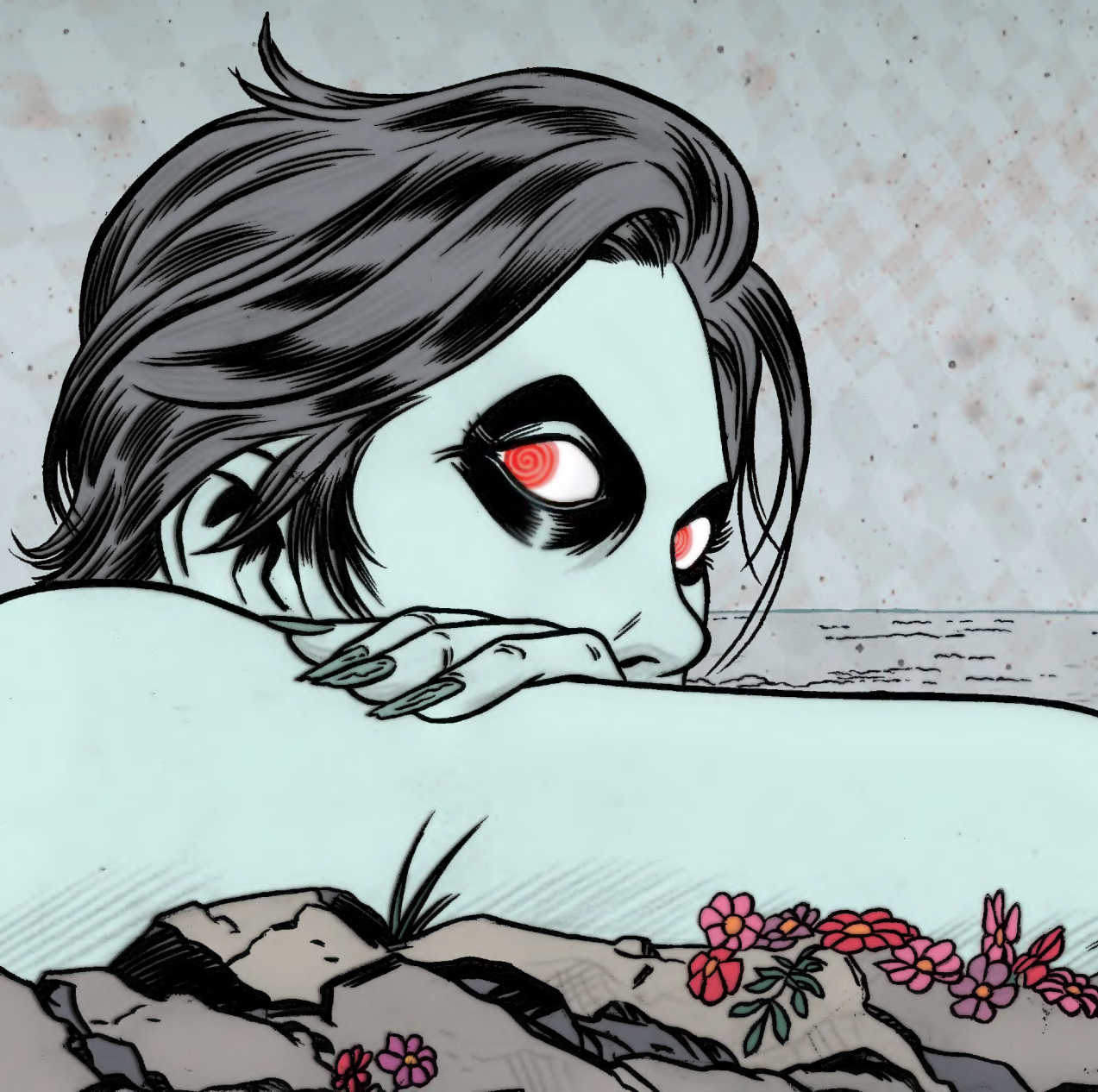
MARVEL
X-STATIX™ Presents:
DEADGIRL™
MILLIGAN • DRAGOTTA • ALLRED

X-STATIX Presents: DEADGIRL



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X-STATIX Presents: DEADGIRL

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MK
LIMITED SERIES
1 of 5
X-STATIX™ Presents:
DEADGIRL™
PETER MILLIGAN
NICK DRAGOTTA
MIKE ALLRED

Whoa! WHAT'S THIS STUFF? IT'S LIKE...IT'S LIKE SKIN...
...SHINY STICKY SKIN...
BLACK PANTHER
AIN'T SKIN. THIS IS... WHADDYA CALL IT... SPAN...
SPAN-- DEX.
LOOK, MARLON! BLOOD!
CJ's
LOTS AND LOTS OF BLOOD!

Whoa! A DEAD SUPER HERO!
FOOL, DOES THAT LOOK LIKE THOR? OR CAPTAIN AMERICA? DOES THAT LOOK LIKE DAREDEVIL?
Huhm?

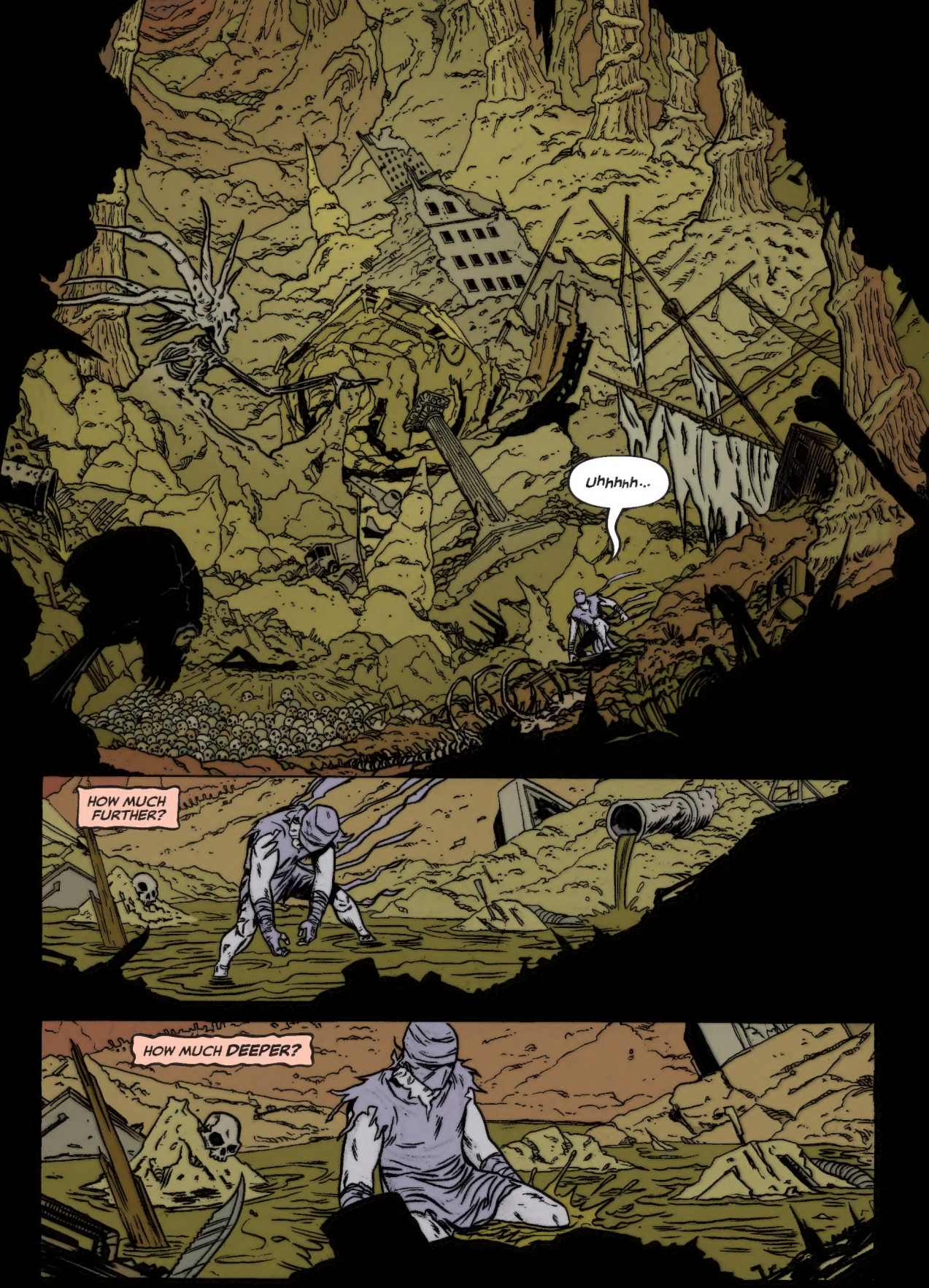
Uh... N-NOW YOU MENTION IT...
ANYWAY... SUPER HEROES DON'T GET BEAT UP. NOT LIKE THAT THEY DON'T.

SO IF THAT AIN'T A SUPER HERO...IT MUST BE A...
BLACK
RIGHT ON, EINSTEIN. IT'S A SUPER-VILLAIN. OR WHAT'S LEFT OF ONE.

WOULDN'T IT BE COOL TO BE A SUPER-VILLAIN? GO AROUND DOING EVIL AN' TERRORIZIN' SOCIETY!
YOUR STUPIDITY IS BECOMIN' AN EMBARRASSMENT, LARRY. YOU KNOW WHAT A SUPER-VILLAIN'S JOB IS?

WH-WHAT'S A SUPER-VILLAIN'S JOB, MARLON?
TO GET BEAT UP ON BY HEROES. OVER AND OVER AGAIN. NOW, WHAT KINDA JOB IS THAT?
MAN, I'D RATHER GO FIGHT IN VIETNAM LIKE DADDY.

YOU AIN'T OLD ENOUGH TO FIGHT IN NO VIETNAM.
WILL BE SOON.
IT'LL ALL BE OVER BY THEN.
YOUR @$$ REALLY IS STUPID.
SHOULDN'T WE, LIKE, TELL SOMEONE...'BOUT WHAT WE SAW?
Tsch
THEY'D ONLY FIND A WAY TO BLAME US. KEEP YO' HEAD DOWN AN' YO' MOUTH SHUT, BROTHER.
WHAT D'YA THINK HAPPENS TO SUPER-VILLAINS WHEN THEY DIE, MARLON?
WAR
HOTEL



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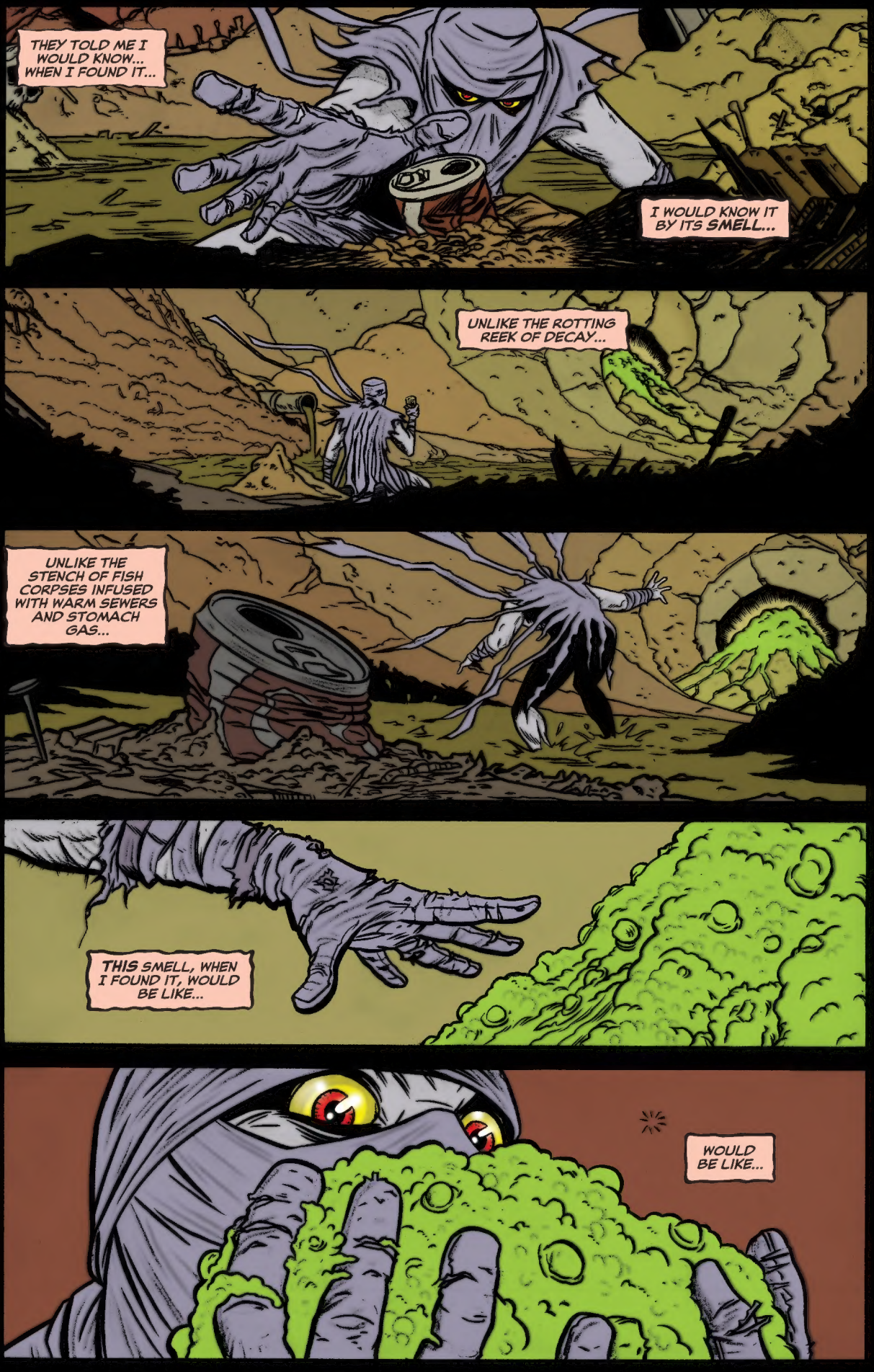
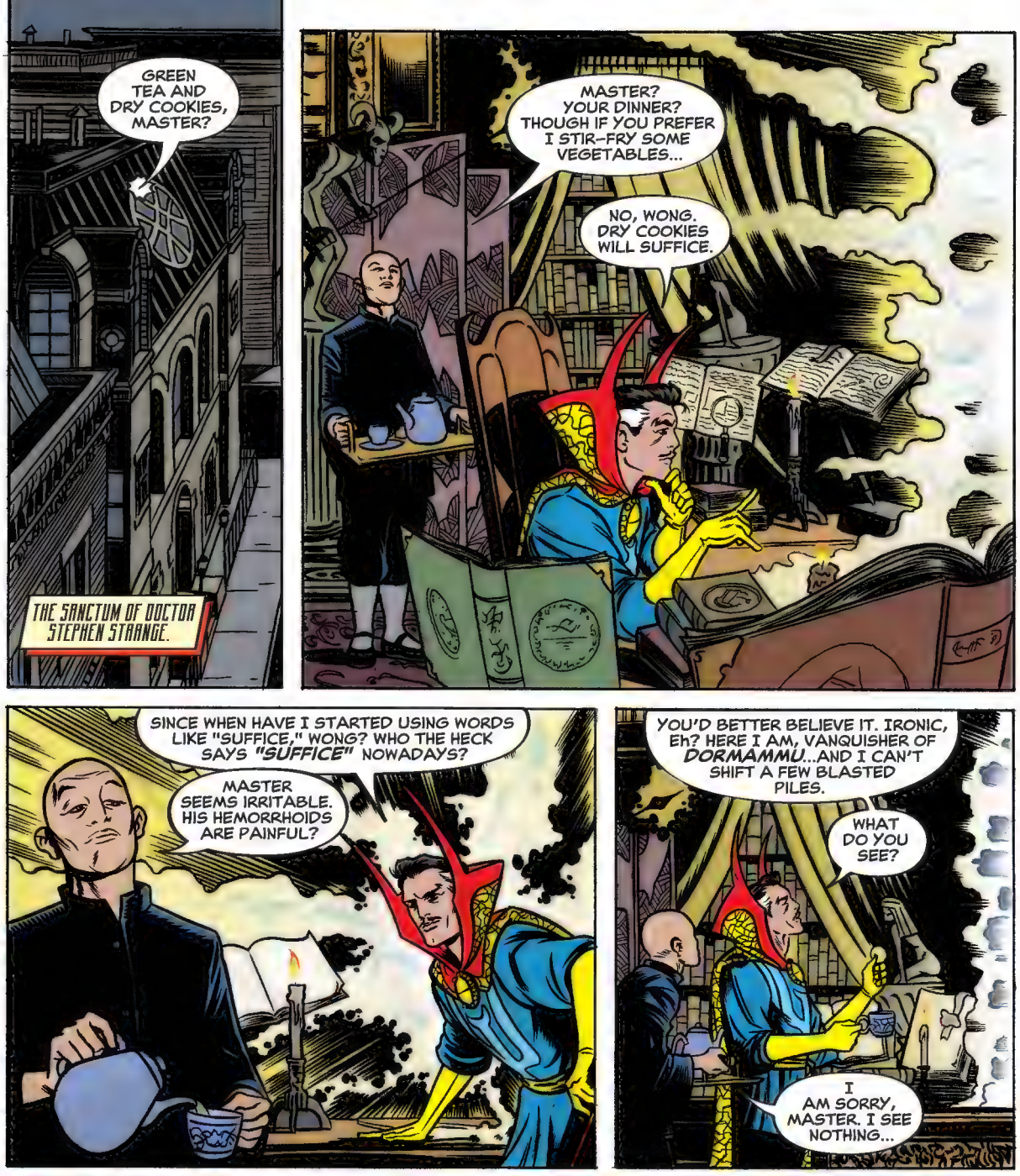
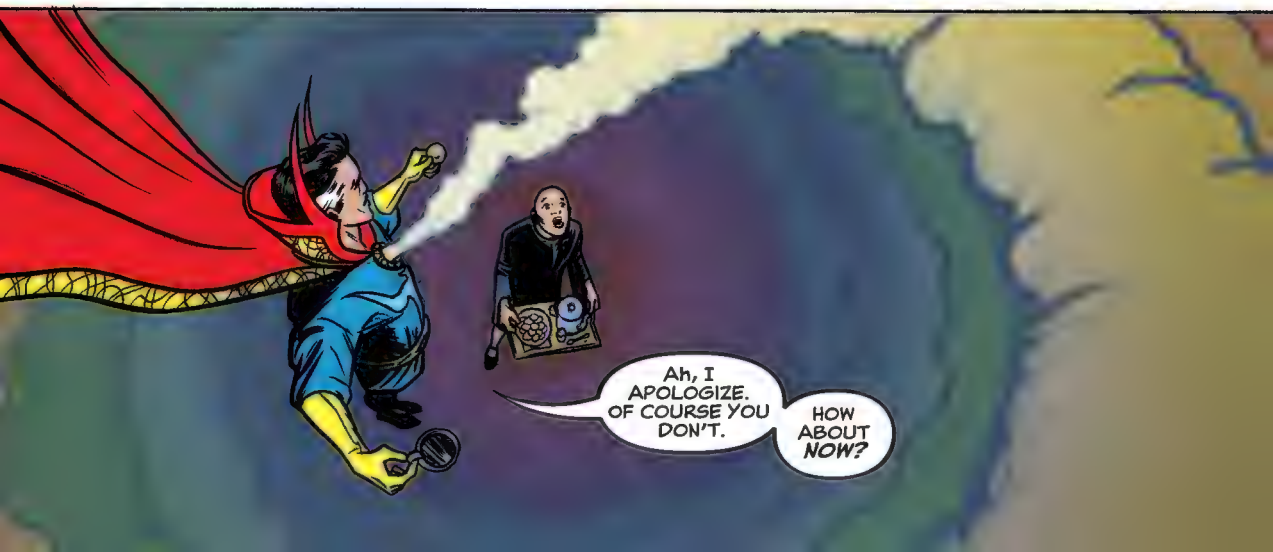

THEY TOLD ME I WOULD KNOW... WHEN I FOUND IT...
I WOULD KNOW IT BY ITS SMELL...
UNLIKE THE ROTTING REEK OF DECAY...
UNLIKE THE STENCH OF FISH CORPSES INFUSED WITH WARM SEWERS AND STOMACH GAS...
THIS SMELL, WHEN I FOUND IT, WOULD BE LIKE...
WOULD BE LIKE...

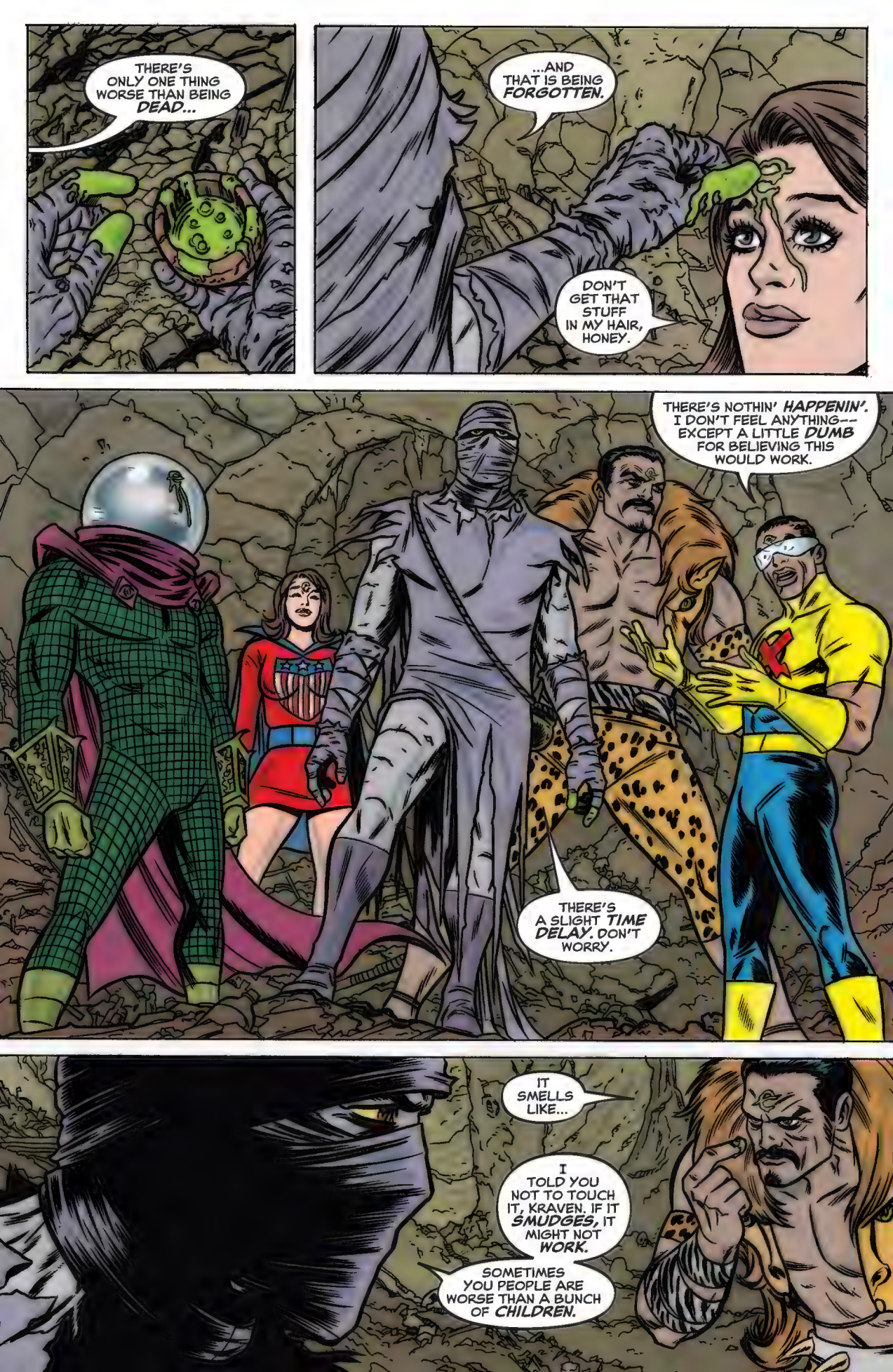

GREEN TEA AND DRY COOKIES, MASTER?
THE SANCTUM OF DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE.
MASTER? YOUR DINNER? THOUGH IF YOU PREFER I STIR-FRY SOME VEGETABLES...
NO, WONG. DRY COOKIES WILL SUFFICE.
SINCE WHEN HAVE I STARTED USING WORDS LIKE "SUFFICE," WONG? WHO THE HECK SAYS "SUFFICE" NOWADAYS?
MASTER SEEMS IRRITABLE. HIS HEMORRHOIDS ARE PAINFUL?
YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT. IRONIC, Eh? HERE I AM, VANQUISHER OF DORMAMMU...AND I CAN'T SHIFT A FEW BLASTED PILES.
WHAT DO YOU SEE?
I AM SORRY, MASTER. I SEE NOTHING...


Ah, I APOLOGIZE. OF COURSE YOU DON'T.
HOW ABOUT NOW?

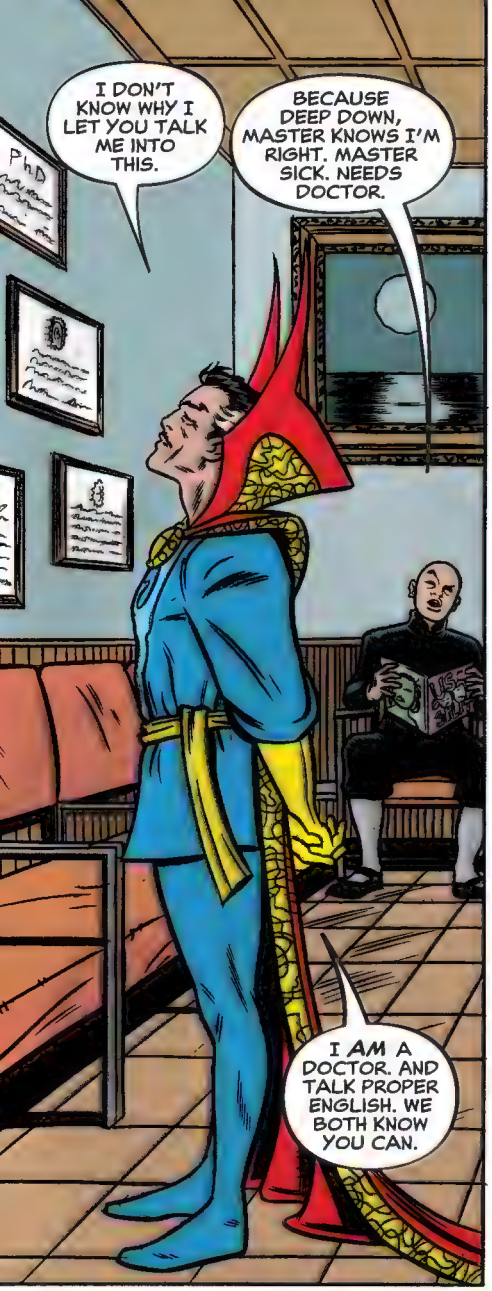
Oh. IT'S...IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
Hmm.
I THINK THESE COOKIES ARE A LITTLE STALE.

SO-- YOU THINK THIS LIGHT SHOW IS PRETTY?
BEAUTIFUL, MASTER.
IT'S HELL.
TO BE MORE PRECISE, THIS MIDDLE SECTION IS A REPRESENTATION OF HELL. A MAGICAL MAPPA MUNDI OF THE NETHERWORLD.
IT'S WHERE THE LOWER LIFE-FORMS CONGREGATE. WHERE THOSE SOULS THAT ARE CORRUPTED OR SPOILED DESCEND.
NOT QUITE SO BEAUTIFUL WHEN YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS, IS IT?
JUST LIKE LIFE, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.
YOU MAY WONDER WHY I'M SO INTERESTED IN THE AFTERWORLD TODAY, WONG.
MASTER FEELING ESPECIALLY MORBID?
NO. LOOK, IN THE VERY CENTER OF WHAT WE TERM HELL...
SOMETHING UNUSUAL HAS HAPPENED.

IN THE DEEPEST RECESS OF THAT GREAT MERCILESS BOWEL OF SORROW... SOMETHING HAS BEEN DISTURBED.
THIS COULD ONLY MEAN THAT...
YES, MASTER? YOU WERE SAYING?
WAS I? Oh, IT DOESN'T MATTER.
HELL, HEAVEN, EARTH, LIFE, DEATH.
WHO CARES?
BEEP BOOP
IT'S WONG. I'D LIKE TO BRING FORWARD OUR APPOINTMENT.
HE'S GETTING WORSE.


THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WORSE THAN BEING DEAD...
...AND THAT IS BEING FORGOTTEN.
DON'T GET THAT STUFF IN MY HAIR, HONEY.
THERE'S NOTHIN' HAPPENIN'. I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING-- EXCEPT A LITTLE DUMB FOR BELIEVING THIS WOULD WORK.
THERE'S A SLIGHT TIME DELAY. DON'T WORRY.
IT SMELLS LIKE...
I TOLD YOU NOT TO TOUCH IT, KRAVEN. IF IT SMUDGES, IT MIGHT NOT WORK.
SOMETIMES YOU PEOPLE ARE WORSE THAN A BUNCH OF CHILDREN.

MANHATTAN WAS WHERE SPIDER-MAN KEPT BEATING ME UP... DO WE HAVE TO GO THERE?
YES, MYSTERIO. STOP QUIBBLING...
AND REMEMBER, WE'LL ONLY HAVE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS...
...WELL, THERE GOES MYSTERIO.
I CAN'T WAIT TO JOIN HIM. THIS PLACE IS SO DEPRESSING.
THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S FULL OF ILL-BRED PEOPLE LIKE YOU, ALICAR. A THOROUGHLY UNCIVILIZED--
Ah! THE RESURRECTION OF KRAVEN THE HUNTER. AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON.
YO, THROW ME SOME MORE OF THAT GLOOP, I ALWAYS DID HAVE A HIGH TOLERANCE FOR...
KINDA SCARY, AIN'T IT?
YES, MADELINE. IT'S VERY SCARY.
BUT NOT FOR US.


I DON'T KNOW WHY I LET YOU TALK ME INTO THIS.
BECAUSE DEEP DOWN, MASTER KNOWS I'M RIGHT. MASTER SICK. NEEDS DOCTOR.
I AM A DOCTOR. AND TALK PROPER ENGLISH. WE BOTH KNOW YOU CAN.

HI, I'M DOCTOR YOUNG. MISTER WONG TOLD ME YOU...

STEPHEN? STEPHEN STRANGE?
HELLO, RICHARD.

THIS IS INCREDIBLE! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE MEDICAL SCHOOL. I HEARD YOU HAD AN ACCIDENT, SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR HANDS...
A LONG TIME AGO...

COME INTO MY OFFICE. TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO.
WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT YOU BEING DEPRESSED?

EVERYONE READY?
Mmm! THAT AIR SMELLS FRESH. REAL LIVING AIR.
REAL CAR FUMES. DELICIOUS!
I'M HUNGRY. I'M THINKIN'...RIBS WITH CHILI SAUCE. AND COLD BEER. ICE-COLD BEER.
ME, I'D LIKE TO CHASE DOWN A MAN AND WATCH HIM CHOKE TO DEATH ON HIS OWN VOMIT.
TO EACH HIS OWN, I SUPPOSE.
THIS IS A RESTRICTED AREA. DO YOU PEOPLE HAVE SECURITY PASSES?
ISN'T IT GREAT TO BE ALIVE?

...THAT'S WHAT PASSES FOR MY LIFE. I LEFT OUT THE MORE HARROWING DETAILS.
BUT YOU'VE GOT NO REASON TO BE DEPRESSED. YOU'RE...
...YOU'RE LUCKY!

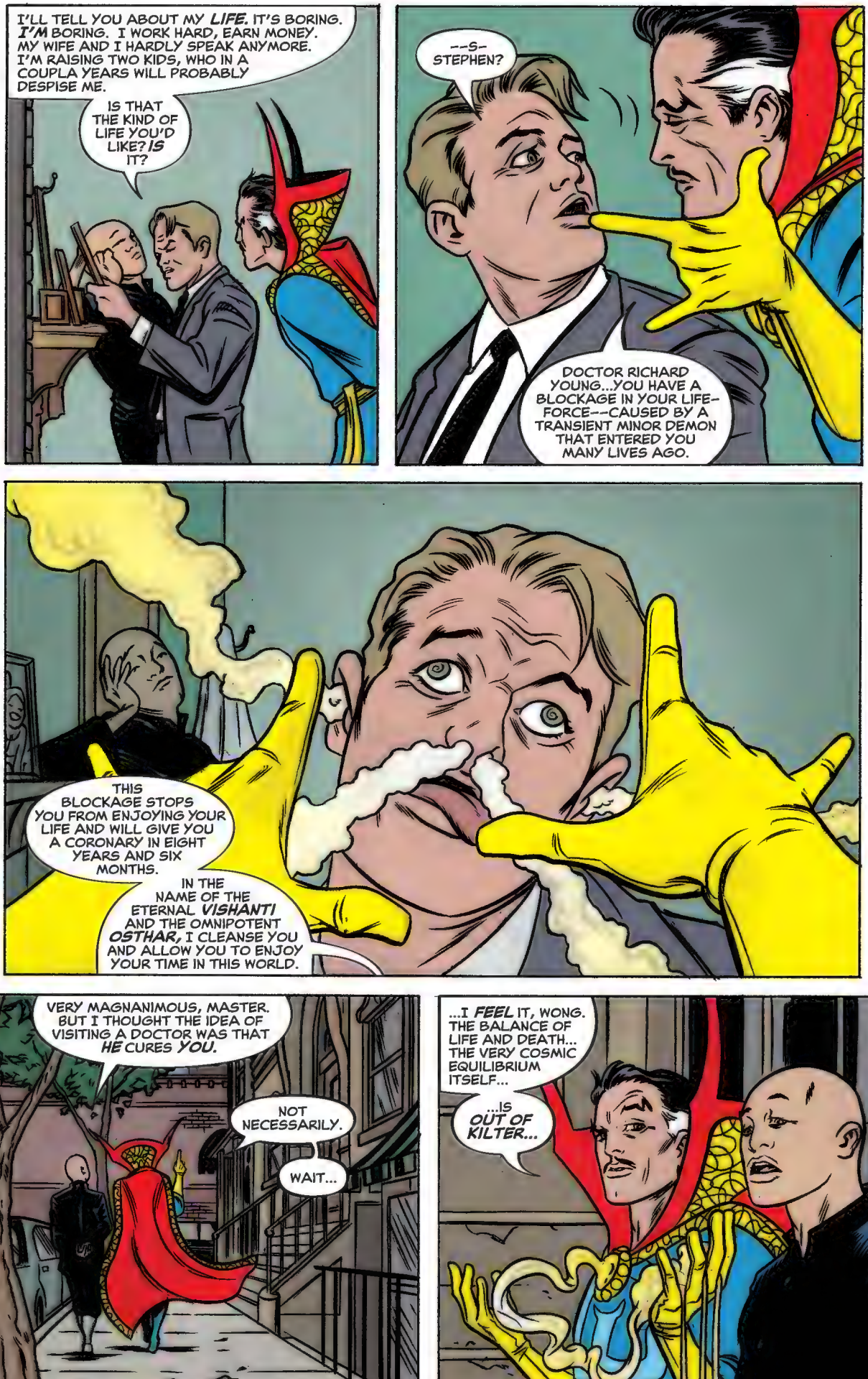
LUCKY? I'M THE LONELIEST MAN ON THE PLANET.
I'M DEAD FROM THE AMULET DOWN.
BUT YOU HAVE A FASCINATING, UNUSUAL LIFE!

I HAVE NOTHING.
IF YOU OVERLOOK AN UNCANNY KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTIC ARTS. AND THAT ISN'T QUITE AS MUCH FUN AS IT SOUNDS, RICHARD.
PARTICULARLY ON A WET SATURDAY EVENING WHEN THERE'S NOTHING ON TV.

I CAN'T EVEN LOOK AT A WOMAN LIKE A NORMAL MAN.
WHEN I SEE A WOMAN, ALL I'M INTERESTED IN IS HER AURA.

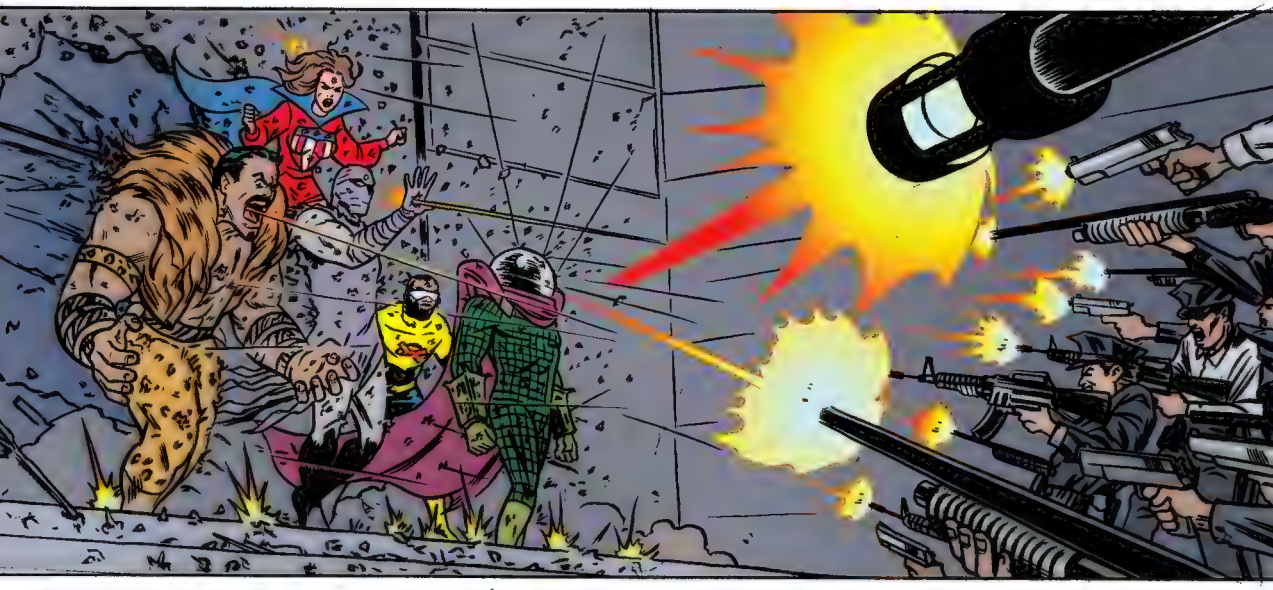
YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN, I PRESUME. YOUR LOVED ONES.

YOU HAVE A REAL LIFE, RICHARD. YOU HAVE LOVE. HOW I ENVY YOU.

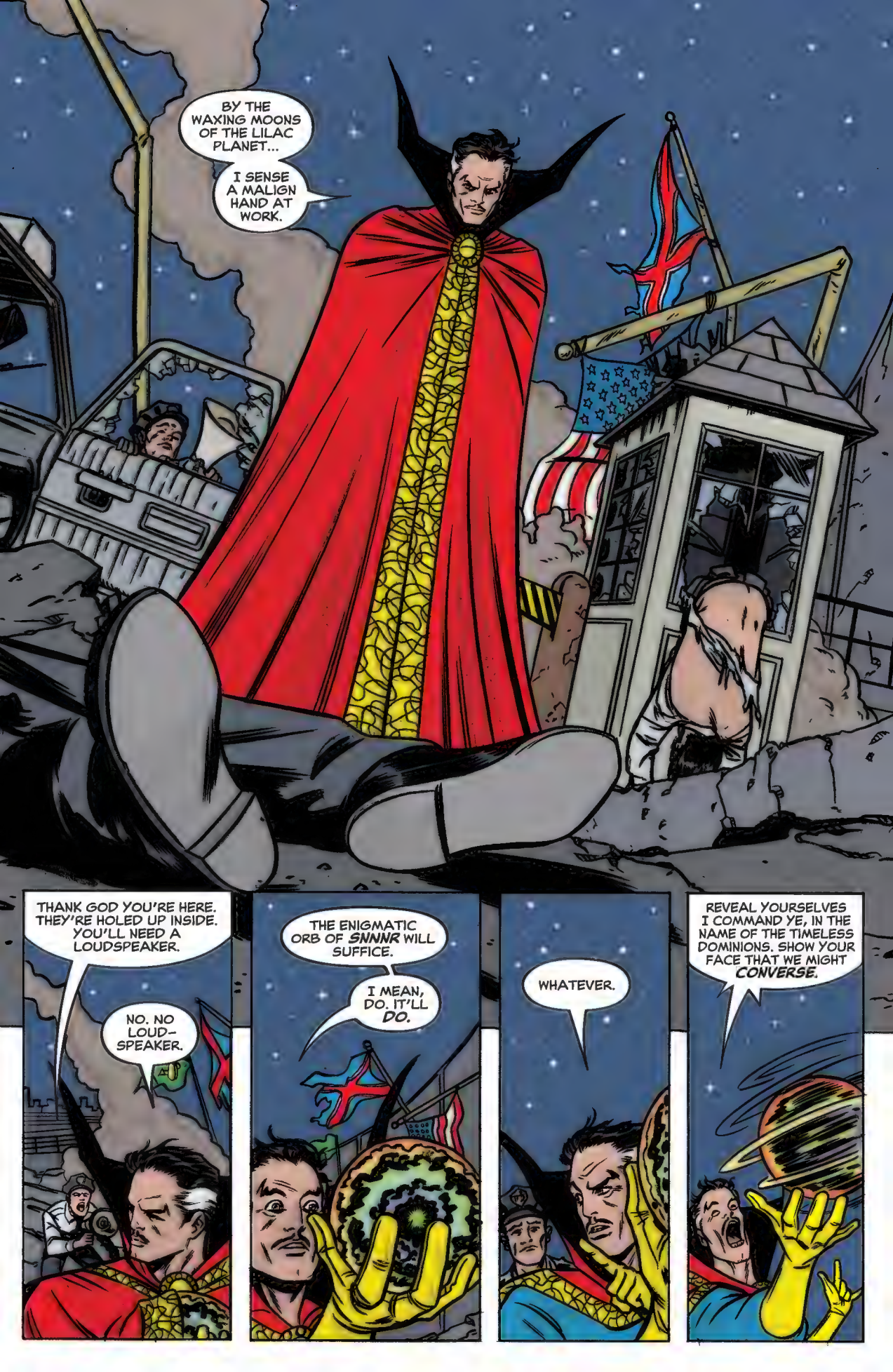

I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT MY LIFE. IT'S BORING. I'M BORING. I WORK HARD, EARN MONEY. MY WIFE AND I HARDLY SPEAK ANYMORE. I'M RAISING TWO KIDS, WHO IN A COUPLA YEARS WILL PROBABLY DESPISE ME.
IS THAT THE KIND OF LIFE YOU'D LIKE? IS IT?
--S-STEPHEN?
DOCTOR RICHARD YOUNG...YOU HAVE A BLOCKAGE IN YOUR LIFE-FORCE--CAUSED BY A TRANSIENT MINOR DEMON THAT ENTERED YOU MANY LIVES AGO.
THIS BLOCKAGE STOPS YOU FROM ENJOYING YOUR LIFE AND WILL GIVE YOU A CORONARY IN EIGHT YEARS AND SIX MONTHS.
IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL VISHANTI AND THE OMNIPOTENT OSTHAR, I CLEANSE YOU AND ALLOW YOU TO ENJOY YOUR TIME IN THIS WORLD.
VERY MAGNANIMOUS, MASTER. BUT I THOUGHT THE IDEA OF VISITING A DOCTOR WAS THAT HE CURES YOU.
NOT NECESSARILY.
WAIT...
...I FEEL IT, WONG. THE BALANCE OF LIFE AND DEATH... THE VERY COSMIC EQUILIBRIUM ITSELF...
...IS OUT OF KILTER...

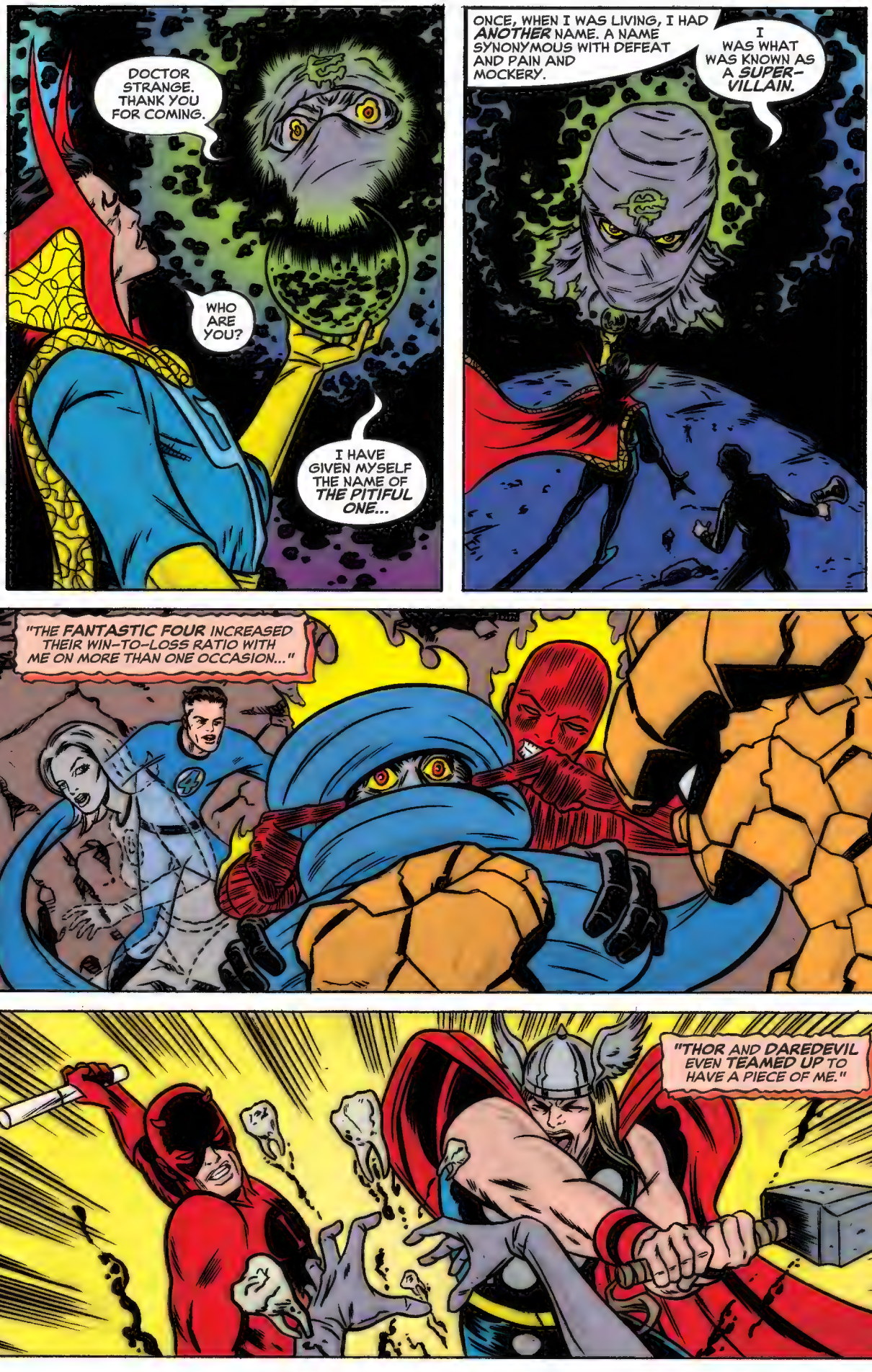
THIS IS AN EMERGENCY! THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING IS UNDER ATTACK!
WE KEEP SHOOTING THEM...

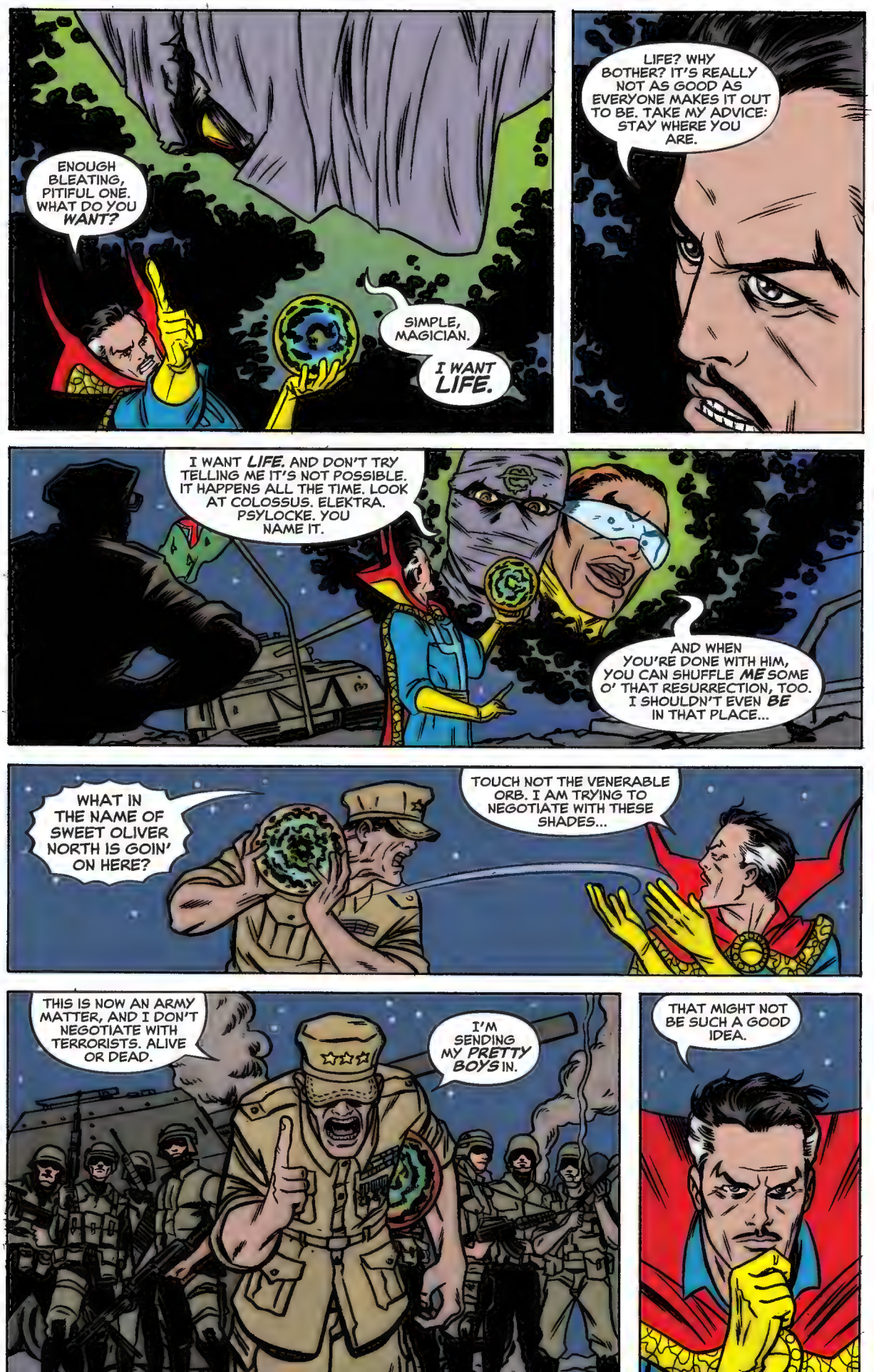
"...BUT THEY DON'T DIE."



TURN OVER TO THE SPORTS CHANNEL, MAN.
NO WAY. THIS LOOKS BIG.
TURN OVER, STUPID.
LIVE
3 ATTACK ON THE U.N.
MARLON, THE NEXT TIME YOU CALL ME STUPID, SITTIN' IN MY HOUSE, WITH THE FOOD MY WIFE COOKED INSIDE YOUR BELLY, I'M GONNA KICK YOUR SKINNY @$$ OUT. UNDERSTAND?
Ah, YEAH. HEY, SORRY, MAN. SORRY. COOL.
THE HOSTAGE-TAKERS SAY THEY WILL KILL ALL THE UNITED NATION DELEGATES UNLESS THEIR DEMANDS ARE MET.
THEY REFUSE TO NEGOTIATE WITH ANYONE EXCEPT THE ONE MAN THEY'VE ASKED FOR.
3 ATTACK ON THE U.N
THIS MYSTERIOUS NEGOTIATOR SHOULD BE ARRIVING ANY MINUTE NOW...
LET'S HOPE HE'S THE WHOLE BALL OF WAX...


BY THE WAXING MOONS OF THE LILAC PLANET...
I SENSE A MALIGN HAND AT WORK.
THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE. THEY'RE HOLED UP INSIDE. YOU'LL NEED A LOUDSPEAKER.
NO. NO LOUD-SPEAKER.
THE ENIGMATIC ORB OF SNNNR WILL SUFFICE.
I MEAN, DO. IT'LL DO.
WHATEVER.
REVEAL YOURSELVES I COMMAND YE, IN THE NAME OF THE TIMELESS DOMINIONS. SHOW YOUR FACE THAT WE MIGHT CONVERSE.


DOCTOR STRANGE. THANK YOU FOR COMING.
WHO ARE YOU?
I HAVE GIVEN MYSELF THE NAME OF THE PITIFUL ONE...
ONCE, WHEN I WAS LIVING, I HAD ANOTHER NAME. A NAME SYNONYMOUS WITH DEFEAT AND PAIN AND MOCKERY.
I WAS WHAT WAS KNOWN AS A SUPER-VILLAIN.
"THE FANTASTIC FOUR INCREASED THEIR WIN-TO-LOSS RATIO WITH ME ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION..."
"THOR AND DAREDEVIL EVEN TEAMED UP TO HAVE A PIECE OF ME."


ENOUGH BLEATING, PITIFUL ONE. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
SIMPLE, MAGICIAN.
I WANT LIFE.
LIFE? WHY BOTHER? IT'S REALLY NOT AS GOOD AS EVERYONE MAKES IT OUT TO BE. TAKE MY ADVICE: STAY WHERE YOU ARE.
I WANT LIFE. AND DON'T TRY TELLING ME IT'S NOT POSSIBLE. IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME. LOOK AT COLOSSUS. ELEKTRA. PSYLOCKE. YOU NAME IT.
AND WHEN YOU'RE DONE WITH HIM, YOU CAN SHUFFLE ME SOME O' THAT RESURRECTION, TOO. I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE IN THAT PLACE...
WHAT IN THE NAME OF SWEET OLIVER NORTH IS GOIN' ON HERE?
TOUCH NOT THE VENERABLE ORB. I AM TRYING TO NEGOTIATE WITH THESE SHADES...
THIS IS NOW AN ARMY MATTER, AND I DON'T NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS. ALIVE OR DEAD.
I'M SENDING MY PRETTY BOYS IN.
THAT MIGHT NOT BE SUCH A GOOD IDEA.

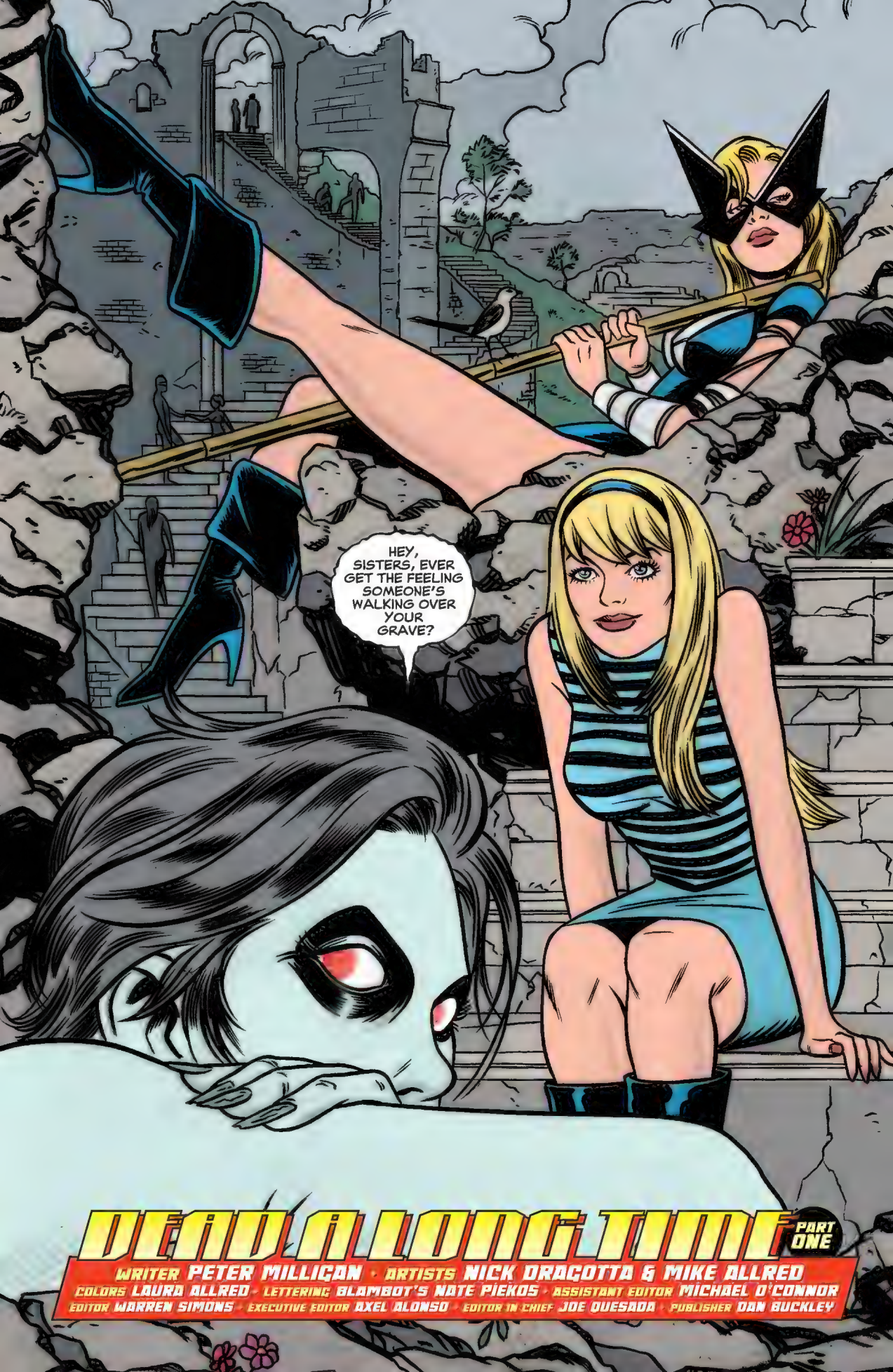
AFTER THE SLAUGHTER, IN WHICH MANY HOSTAGES, SERVICEMEN AND CIVILIANS PERISHED, THE TERRORISTS VANISHED...
YES, I AM SURE THEY VANISHED. BACK TO THE UNDER-WORLD.
UNTIL THE NEXT TIME THEY GATE-CRASH THIS PLANE, DEMANDING RIGHT OF ABODE...
AS I SUSPECTED.
THE ARCANE SCRIPTS CONFIRM THAT THE GREEN CLAY DAUBED ON THE SHADES' FOREHEADS COMES FROM THE LOWEST PIT OF HELL...
...AND GIVES THE SHADES APPROXIMATELY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF LIFE...

THE *PITIFUL ONE* MUST BE STOPPED. AND IT LOOKS LIKE THE JOB HAS FALLEN TO *ME.*
MAYBE YOU'D BETTER HAVE AN EXTRA-DRY COOKIE FOR DINNER TONIGHT.
MARVEL

NO. TONIGHT I THINK I'LL HAVE STEAK. AND BLACK COFFEE. AND...A GLASS OF GOOD RED WINE.
YES, MASTER.

I, WHO USUALLY TRAVEL ALONE, WILL NEED *HELP* IN THIS MISSION.

I AM AT YOUR SERVICE, MASTER.
THANKS, WONG. BUT I'LL NEED SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE LAND OF THE DEAD. WHO CAN MOVE FREELY THROUGH ITS MANY TERRIBLE PASSAGEWAYS...



DEAD A LONG TIME PART ONE

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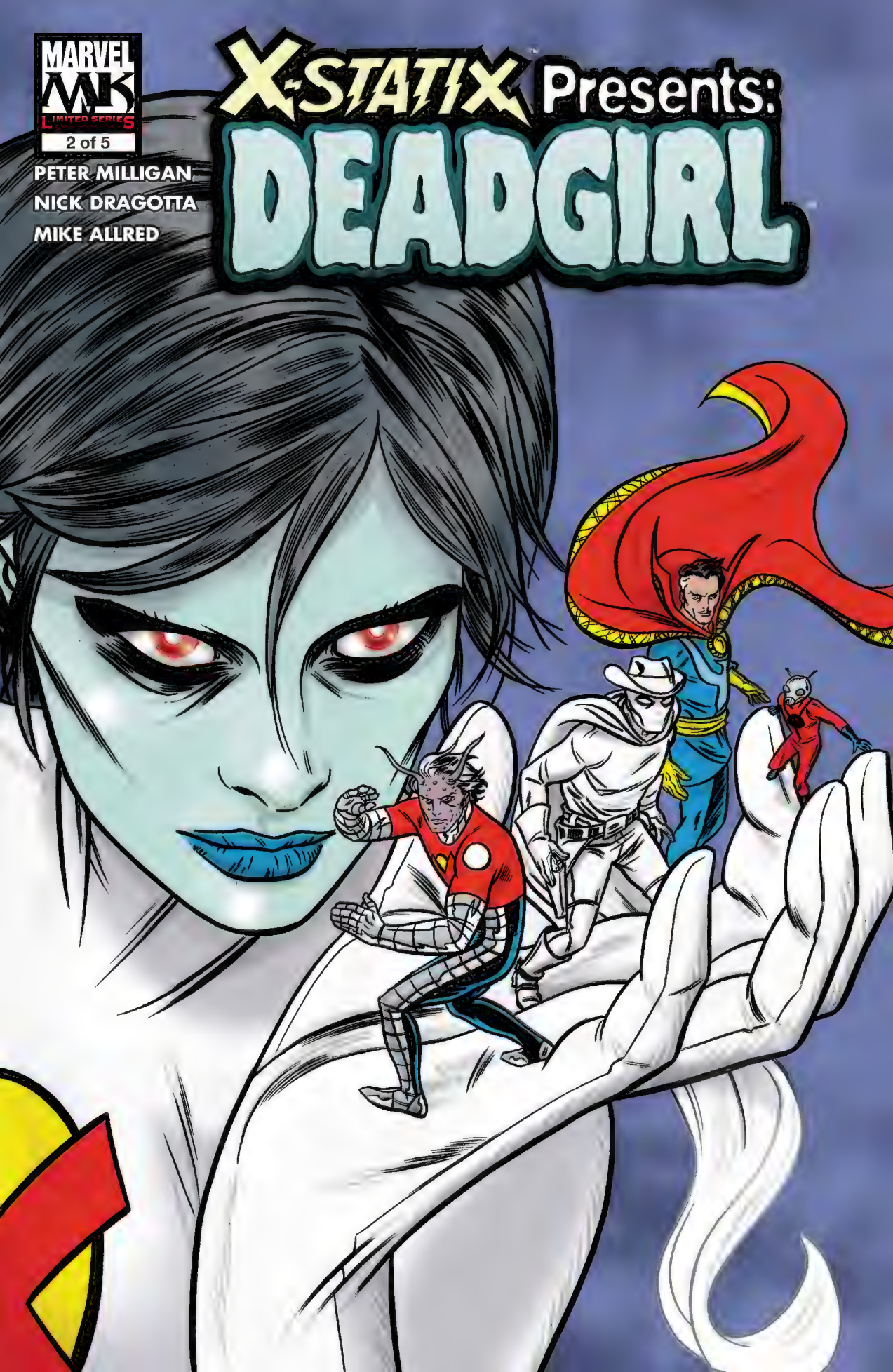
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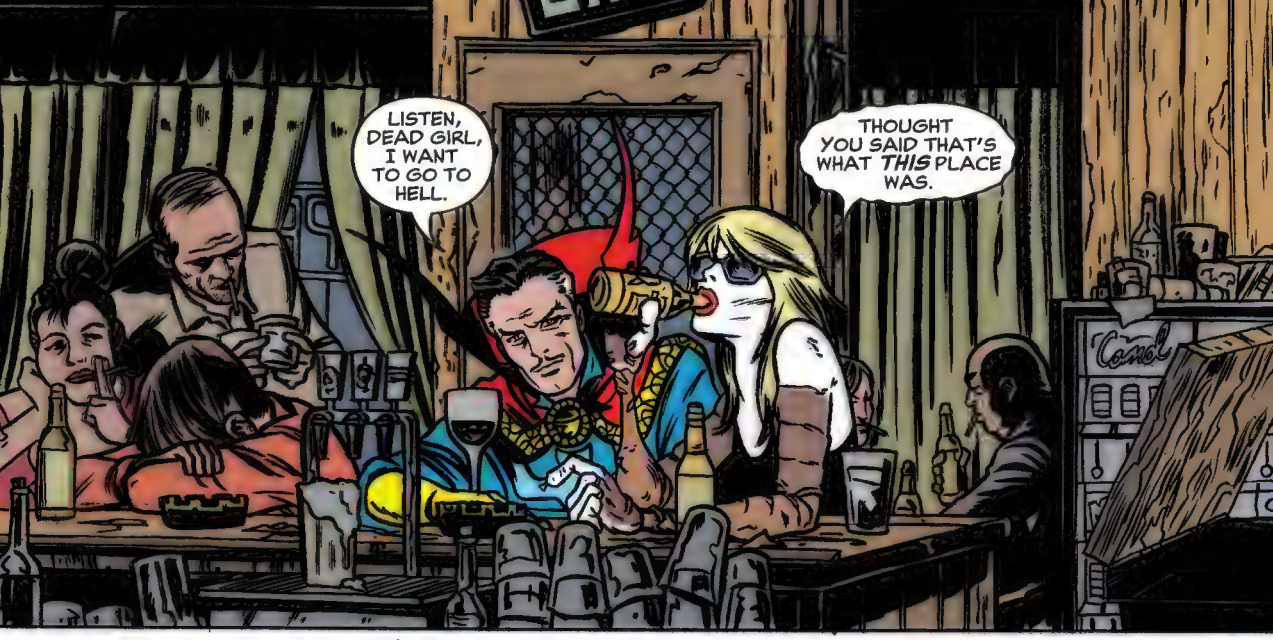
LIMITED SERIES
2 of 5
PETER MILLIGAN
NICK DRAGOTTA
MIKE ALLRED
X-STATIX Presents:
DEADGIRL

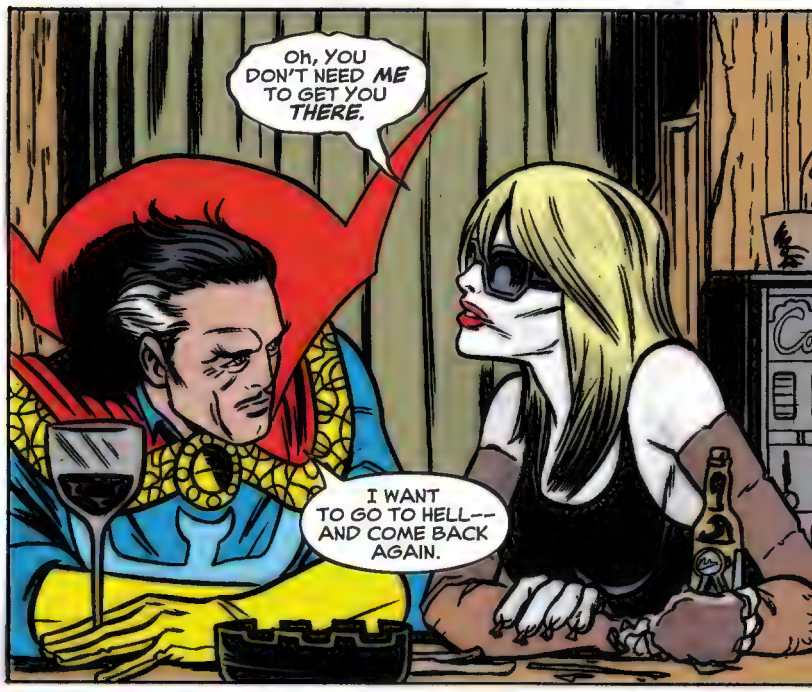
Shopping List
Forty pounds of fresh meat. (Beef, NOT pork.)
Forty-five pounds of ribs and other assorted bone.
Pathmart
Pathmart
ONE PAIR JEANS, ONE BLACK T-SHIRT, ONE PAIR BOOTS...
SALE
2 FOR 1
ONE LARGE TIN OF WHITE PAINT. LIPSTICK, RED. WIG, BLACK. GLASSES, DARK.
BOOEYS
BUCKS
FALSE TEETH.
MEDIUM.
SNAGGLES

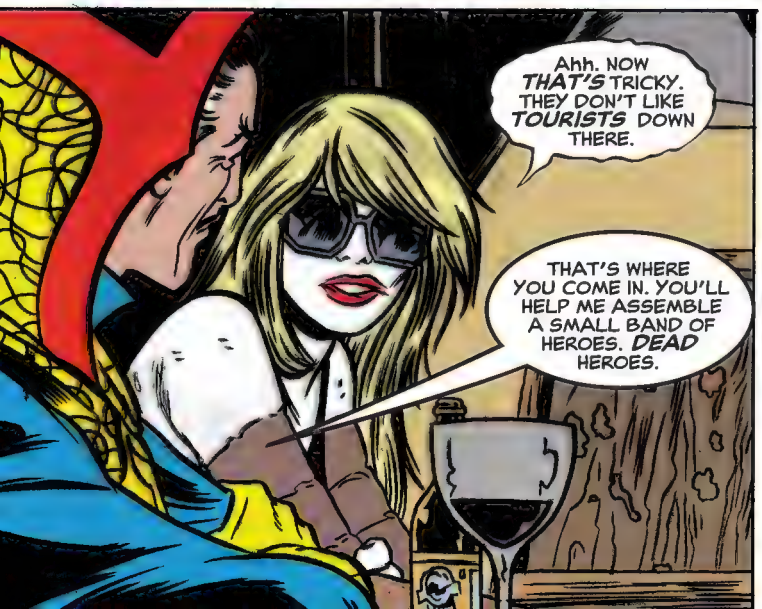
YOU SURE THIS AIN'T PORK?
QUITE SURE. BUT WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? YOU'RE NOT GOING TO EAT IT.
I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF SHARING A BODY WITH A PIG.
WHY SHARE A BODY WITH ANYTHING, DEAD GIRL? WE'RE COMMUNING PERFECTLY WELL AS WE ARE, MAN TO SPIRIT.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT A PAIN IT IS SHOUTING ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE. BESIDES, WHEN I DO BUSINESS WITH A MAN, I LIKE TO BE ABLE TO KICK HIM IN THE NUTS.
FINE, INHABIT YOUR NEW BODY THEN.
NO NEED TO TURN YOUR HEAD, DOC. SOME GUYS GET OFF ON WATCHING A GIRL DRESSING.
I'M NOT SOME GUY.
CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.
OKAY. I'M DONE.

HOW DO I LOOK?
I HAVE GAZED INTO THE BALEFUL ORIFICES OF DORMAMMU...
BUT THEY WERE *PRETTY* COMPARED TO YOU. AND YOUR *BREATH*...
AN OPEN GRAVE.
BAD?
I NEED YOUR *HELP*.
LATER. I'VE BEEN DEAD A LONG TIME. I WANT TO ENJOY BEING *FLESH AND BONE* A LITTLE.
OF COURSE. PERHAPS THE SMELL OF FLOWERS? THE GENTLE PLAY OF AN EVENING BREEZE ON YOUR FACE?
RIGHT.


LISTEN, DEAD GIRL, I WANT TO GO TO HELL.
THOUGHT YOU SAID THAT'S WHAT *THIS* PLACE WAS.
Camel

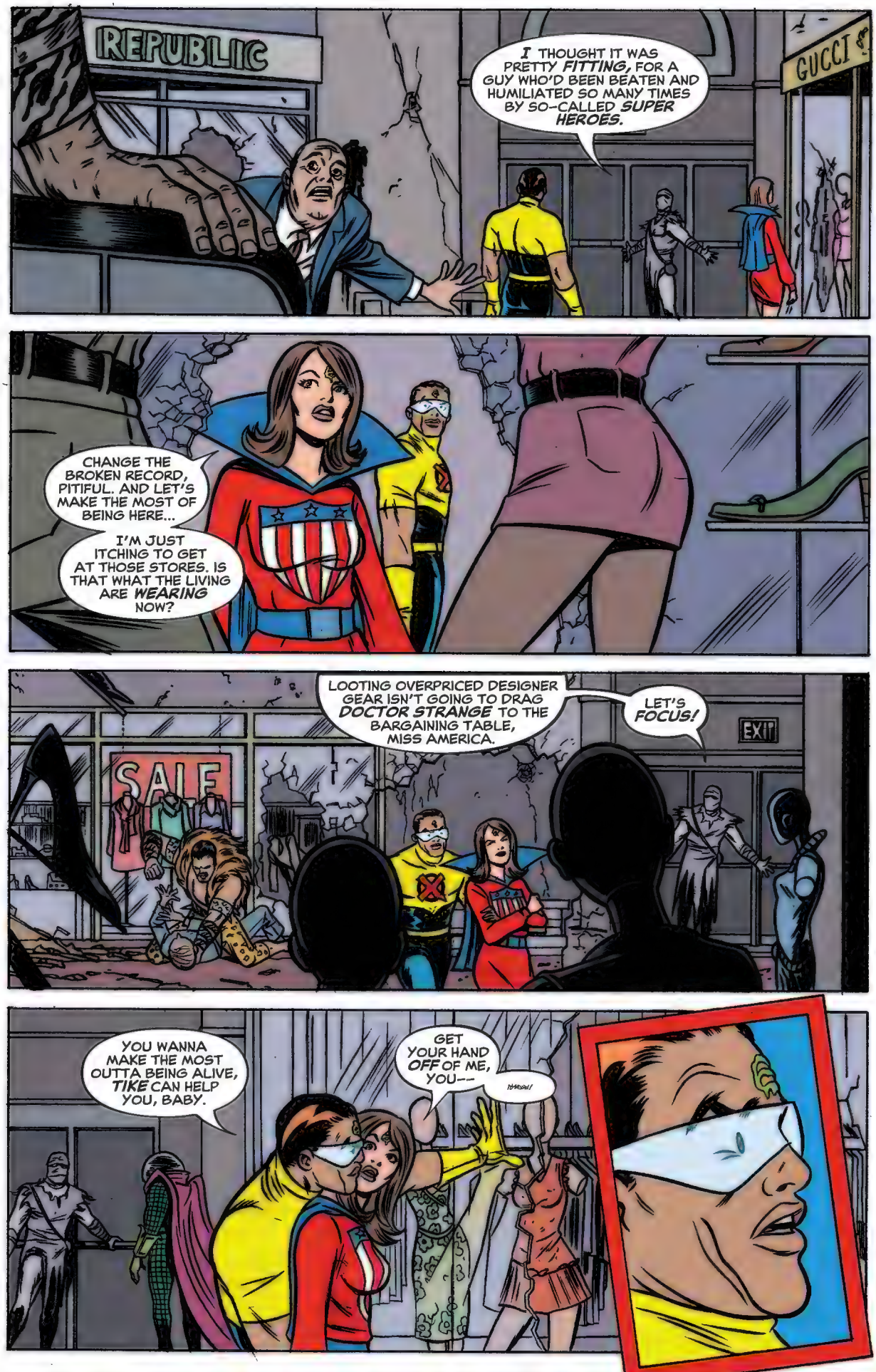
I MEAN *HELL.* HADES, INFERNO, GEHENNA. THE SOMBER LAND BY THE RIVER STYX.


Oh, YOU DON'T NEED *ME* TO GET YOU *THERE.*
I WANT TO GO TO HELL-- AND COME BACK AGAIN.


Ahh. NOW *THAT'S* TRICKY. THEY DON'T LIKE *TOURISTS* DOWN THERE.
THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN. YOU'LL HELP ME ASSEMBLE A SMALL BAND OF HEROES. *DEAD* HEROES.

AND WITH THEIR HELP... WE'LL DEAL WITH... *THE PITIFUL ONE.*
VERY STUPID NAME. WHO IS HE?

CLOTHES HERE!!
DAP
LUCI
SALE 50%
IF YOU MUST KNOW, TIKE, I GAVE MYSELF THAT NAME.
PRETTY STUPID, IF YOU ASK ME.

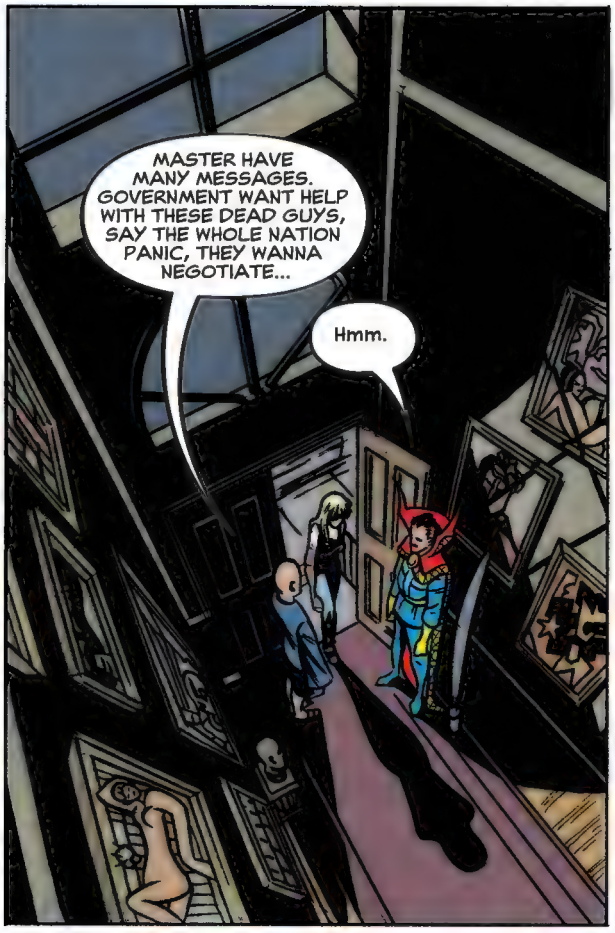

REPUBLIC
GUCCI
I THOUGHT IT WAS PRETTY FITTING, FOR A GUY WHO'D BEEN BEATEN AND HUMILIATED SO MANY TIMES BY SO-CALLED SUPER HEROES.
CHANGE THE BROKEN RECORD, PITIFUL. AND LET'S MAKE THE MOST OF BEING HERE...
I'M JUST ITCHING TO GET AT THOSE STORES. IS THAT WHAT THE LIVING ARE WEARING NOW?
SALE
LOOTING OVERPRICED DESIGNER GEAR ISN'T GOING TO DRAG DOCTOR STRANGE TO THE BARGAINING TABLE, MISS AMERICA.
LET'S FOCUS!
EXIT
YOU WANNA MAKE THE MOST OUTTA BEING ALIVE, TIKE CAN HELP YOU, BABY.
GET YOUR HAND OFF OF ME, YOU--
MMMM!

SMILE FOR THE CAMERAS, EVERYONE.
SMILE NUTHIN'. YOU HEAR WHAT THIS RACIST CALLED ME?

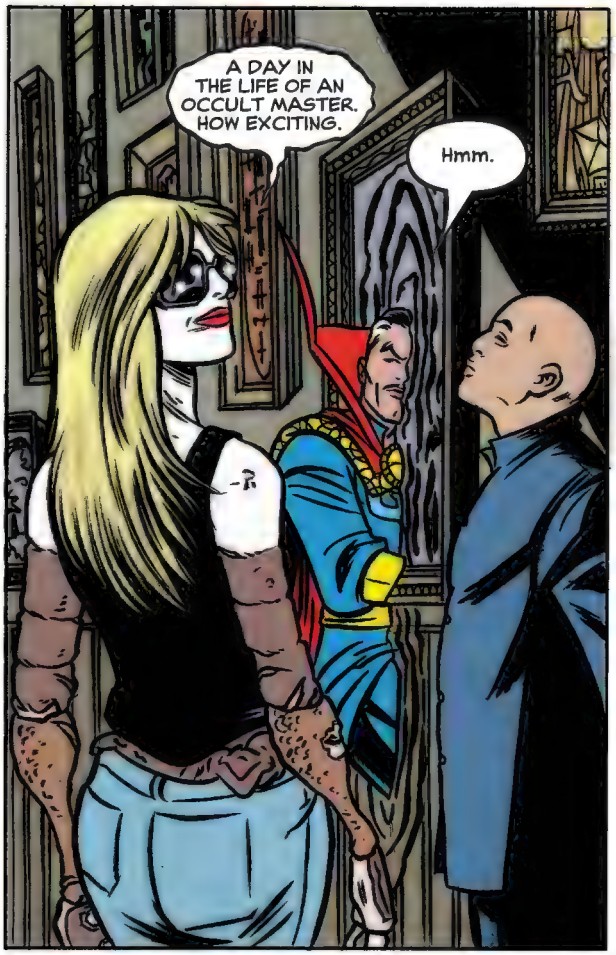
HE HAD HIS HAND ON MY DERRIERE.
YOU STILL CAN'T GO AROUND SAYING THAT TO PEOPLE OF COLOR. TIMES CHANGE.

HAPPENING AGAIN.
DOES ANYONE ELSE FEEL ...SICK?

WITH ME, IT'S MORE OF A HEADACHE.
LET'S REMEMBER, THIS HELL IS WHAT WE'RE WORKING TO BE FREE OF. FOR GOOD, AND NOT JUST TWENTY-FOUR HOUR PASSES.


MASTER HAVE MANY MESSAGES. GOVERNMENT WANT HELP WITH THESE DEAD GUYS, SAY THE WHOLE NATION PANIC, THEY WANNA NEGOTIATE...
Hmm.

AND THERE'S A WOMAN IN LOS ANGELES SAY SHE USE DOCTOR STRANGE'S MAGIC ANTI-AGING CREAM, NOW SHE LOOK LIKE BURN VICTIM AND HER LAWYERS SUE...
THE USUAL, WONG. TELL THEM YOU KNOW NO ONE BY THE NAME OF DOCTOR STRANGE.

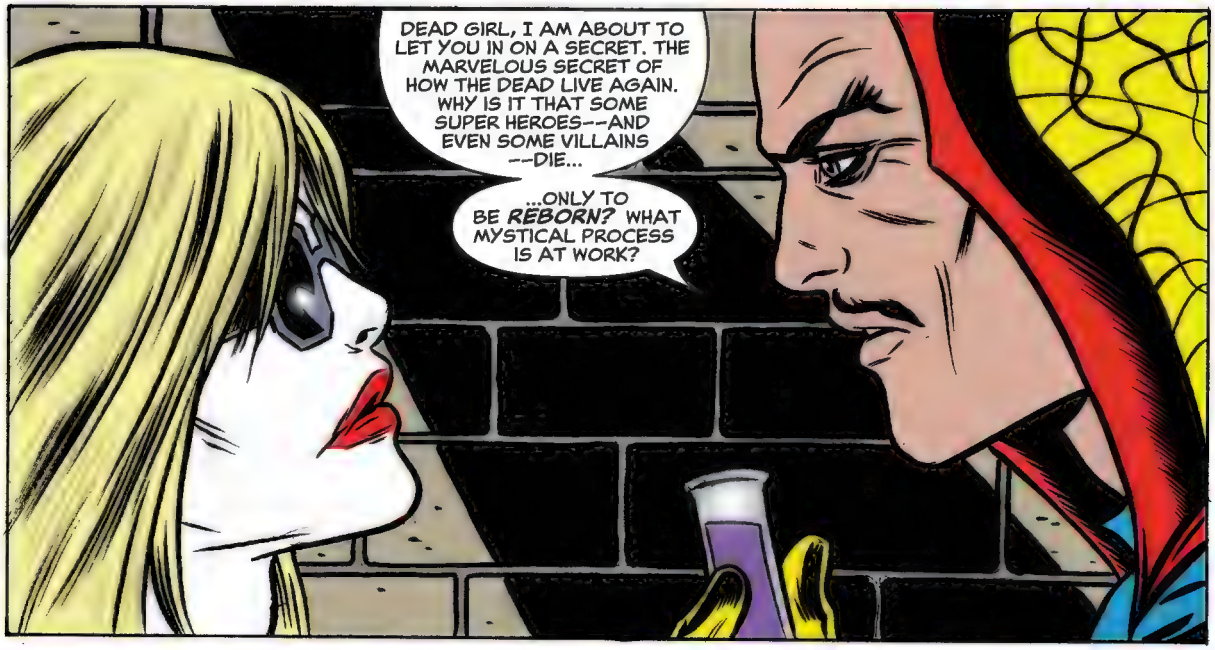

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN OCCULT MASTER. HOW EXCITING.
Hmm.

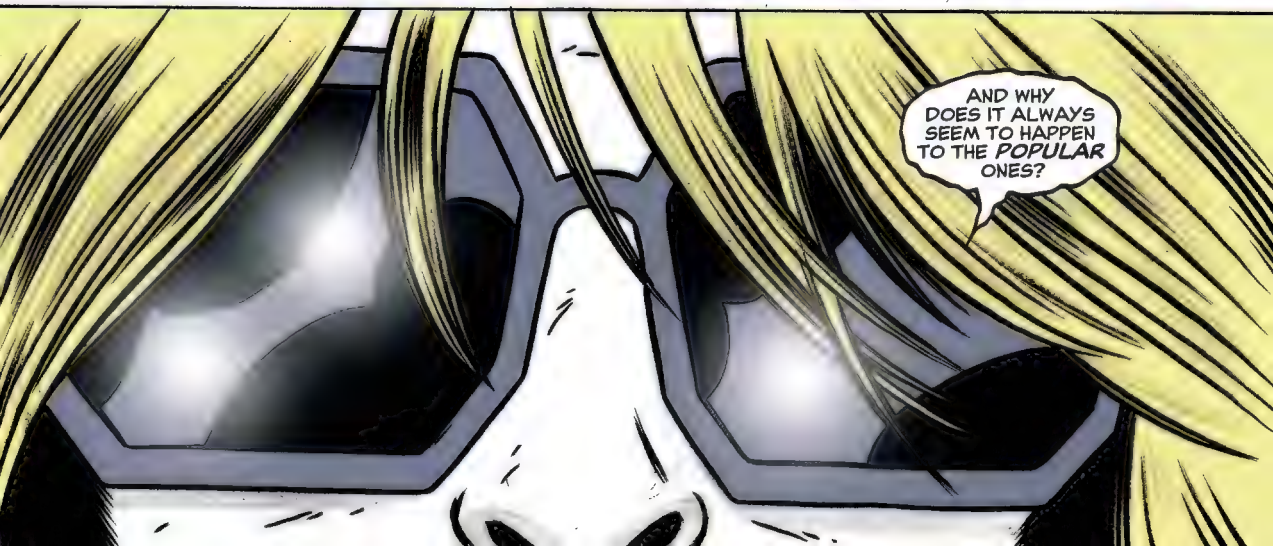
BEHOLD THE FERMENTED SWEAT OF MORPHEUS. ONE SIP OF THIS LIQUID WILL RENDER ME TEMPORARILY DEAD. A LITTLE DEATH, AS IT WERE.
MY BODY WILL STAY HERE, SECURE, IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION.
YOU WILL BE WAITING FOR ME ON THE OTHER SIDE.

WE HAVEN'T DISCUSSED WHAT'S IN ALL THIS FOR ME.
APART FROM THE SATISFACTION OF DOING GOOD?

YOU KNOW IF I LAUGH TOO HARD MY BODY'S LIKELY TO FALL APART.

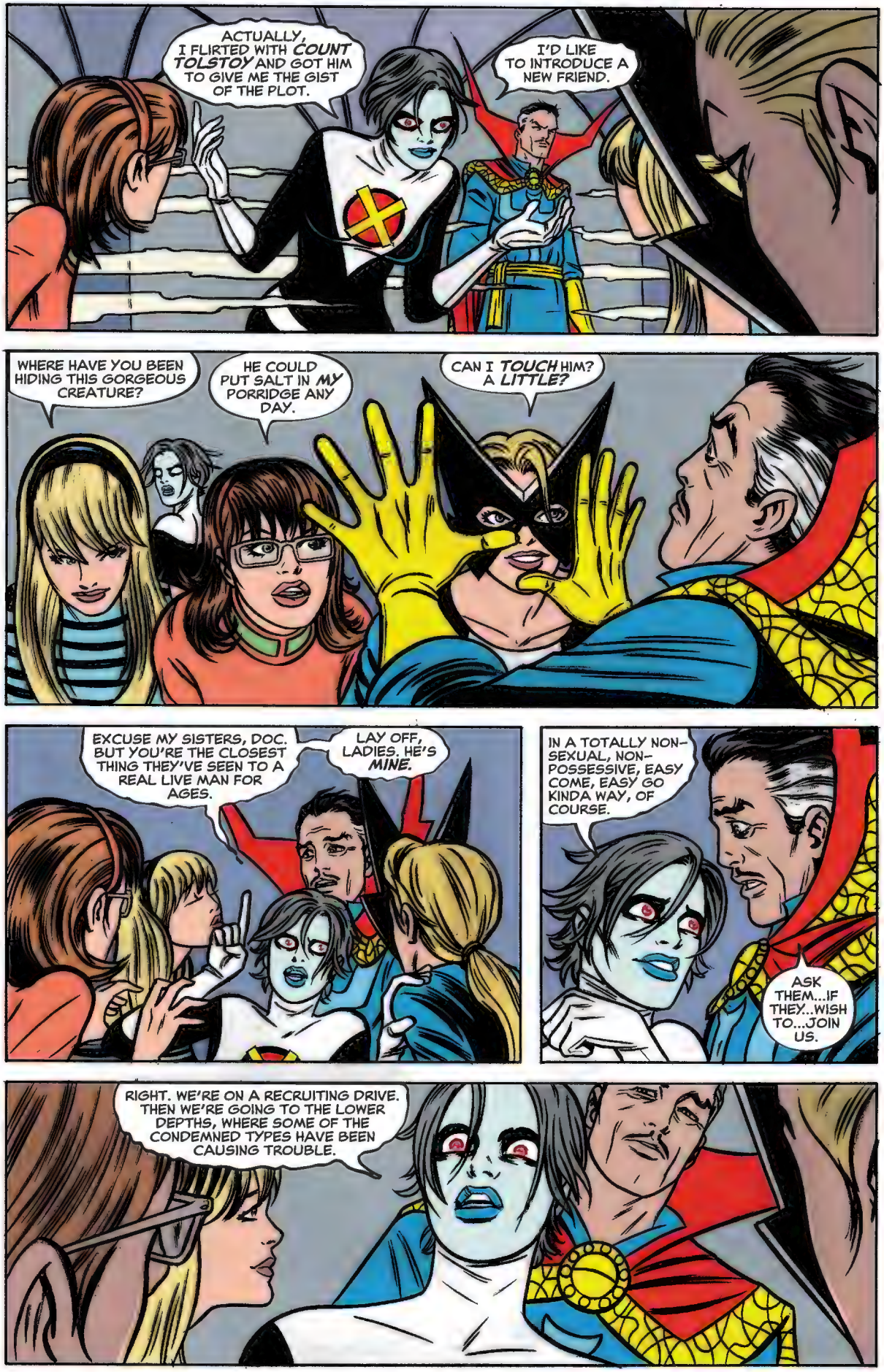
ALL RIGHT. YOU'LL HAVE A CHANCE OF BEING ALIVE AGAIN. Oh, YOU'LL STILL BE DEAD GIRL. BUT YOU'LL BE DEAD GIRL IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.
HOW'RE YOU GONNA SWING THAT?


DEAD GIRL, I AM ABOUT TO LET YOU IN ON A SECRET. THE MARVELOUS SECRET OF HOW THE DEAD LIVE AGAIN. WHY IS IT THAT SOME SUPER HEROES--AND EVEN SOME VILLAINS --DIE...
...ONLY TO BE REBORN? WHAT MYSTICAL PROCESS IS AT WORK?


AND WHY DOES IT ALWAYS SEEM TO HAPPEN TO THE POPULAR ONES?

THE WORLD IS BLUE...LIKE AN ORANGE...
-Agh- hemm.-
I GUESS MASTER AND MISTRESS WON'T BE WANTING TEA AND BISCU--
OY.

I HEREBY CONVENE THIS MEETING OF THE DEAD SISTERS' BOOK CLUB.
HAS EVERYONE READ THIS WEEK'S TITLE?
FUNNY HOW WE CLING TO TERMS LIKE WEEK AND DAY, WHEN THEY DON'T EXIST HERE. GUESS WE'D GO LOOPY IF WE DIDN'T.
I ALMOST WENT LOOPY TRYING TO READ THIS BOOK, GWEN. WHO CHOSE ULYSSES? DEATH IS TOO SHORT.
Och, PLAY THE GAME, MOCKINGBIRD. AFTER NICE MR. JOYCE SPENT ALL THAT TIME WRITING THE WHOLE THING FROM MEMORY FOR US.
"INELUCTABLE MODALITY OF THE VISIBLE," I MEAN!
WHERE'S DEAD GIRL?
JUST LIKE HER TO SKIP THE DIFFICULT BOOKS. Oh, SHE'S FINE WITH THE CHICK-LIT...
AND I DON'T BELIEVE FOR ONE MINUTE SHE READ WAR AND PEACE.


ACTUALLY, I FLIRTED WITH COUNT TOLSTOY AND GOT HIM TO GIVE ME THE GIST OF THE PLOT.
I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE A NEW FRIEND.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN HIDING THIS GORGEOUS CREATURE?
HE COULD PUT SALT IN MY PORRIDGE ANY DAY.
CAN I TOUCH HIM? A LITTLE?
EXCUSE MY SISTERS, DOC. BUT YOU'RE THE CLOSEST THING THEY'VE SEEN TO A REAL LIVE MAN FOR AGES.
LAY OFF, LADIES. HE'S MINE.
IN A TOTALLY NON-SEXUAL, NON-POSSESSIVE, EASY COME, EASY GO KINDA WAY, OF COURSE.
ASK THEM...IF THEY..WISH TO...JOIN US.
RIGHT. WE'RE ON A RECRUITING DRIVE. THEN WE'RE GOING TO THE LOWER DEPTHS, WHERE SOME OF THE CONDEMNED TYPES HAVE BEEN CAUSING TROUBLE.

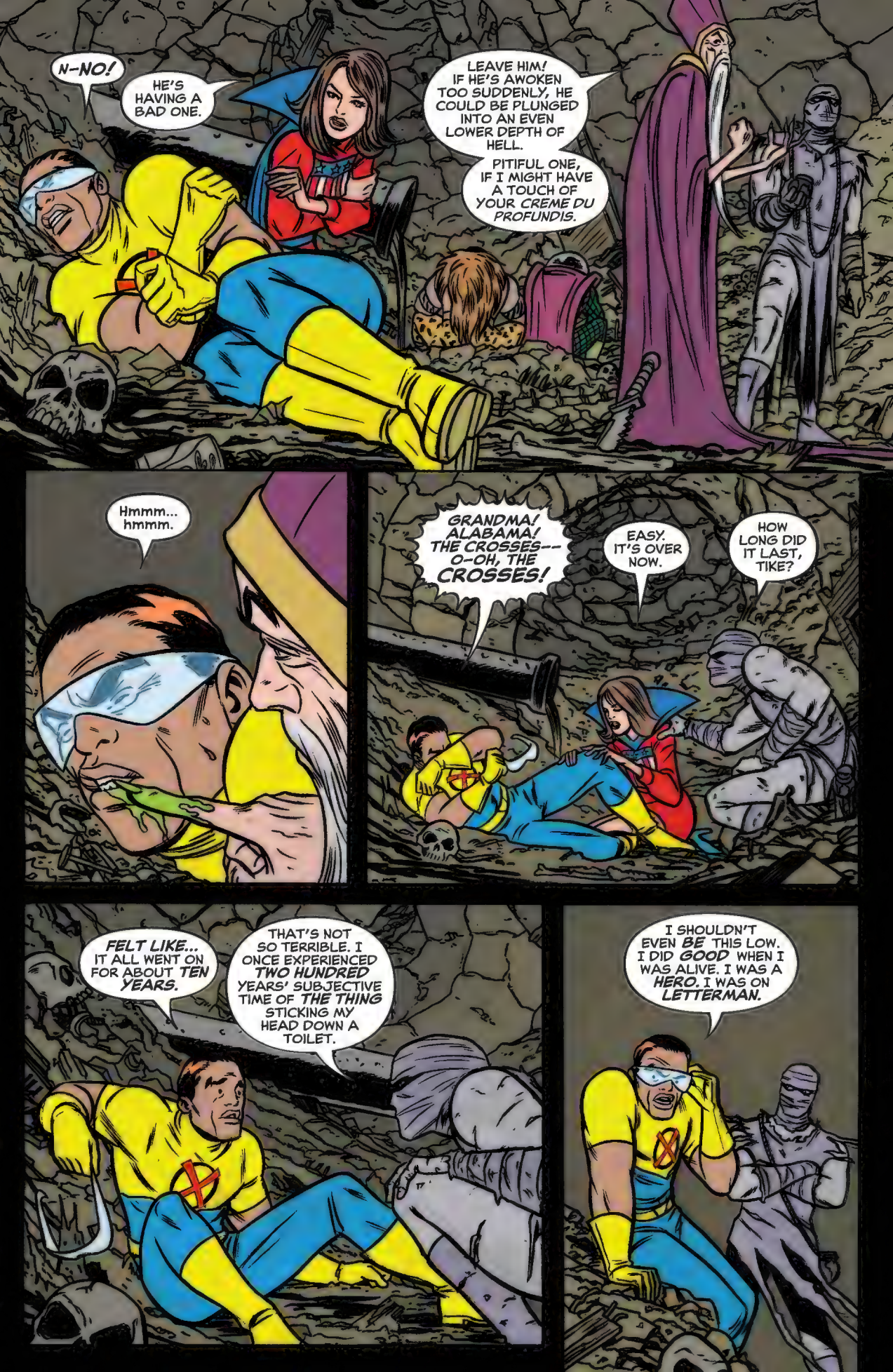
AND YOU WANT US TO GO WITH YOU?
YOU'LL BE IN DEAD GIRL'S TEAM, WHILE I ADVANCE WITH MY DEAD SUPER HEROES.
THE LOWER DEPTHS?
HONEY, IT'S NASTY DOWN THERE. YOU TAKE THAT ELEVATOR, AND YOU MIGHT NEVER COME BACK.
AYE, IT'S EASIER TO GO DOWN THAN IT IS TO COME UP AGAIN.
YOU SPEND ALL YOUR TIME WHINING ABOUT HAVING NOTHING TO DO. THIS IS YOUR CHANCE FOR ACTION. UNLESS YOU'D RATHER STICK TO YOUR BOOK-CLUBS FOR THE NEXT TEN MILLENNIA.
F-FIRST I NEED TO GATHER MY HEROES. D-DOES ANYONE KNOW WHERE ANT-MAN IS?
UPSTAIRS CLEANING THE CARPET, PROBABLY.
SAY WE DO HELP YOU. WHAT DO WE GET OUT OF IT?
TELL 'EM ABOUT THE SECRET, DOC.
REMEMBER COLOSSUS? REMEMBER HOW HE DIED? THOROUGHLY, INDISPUTABLY. DEAD.
SO HOW IS IT... THAT THAT SAME COLOSSUS NOW WALKS AMONG THE LIVING, WITH WARM BLOOD PUMPING THROUGH HIS LIVING HEART?

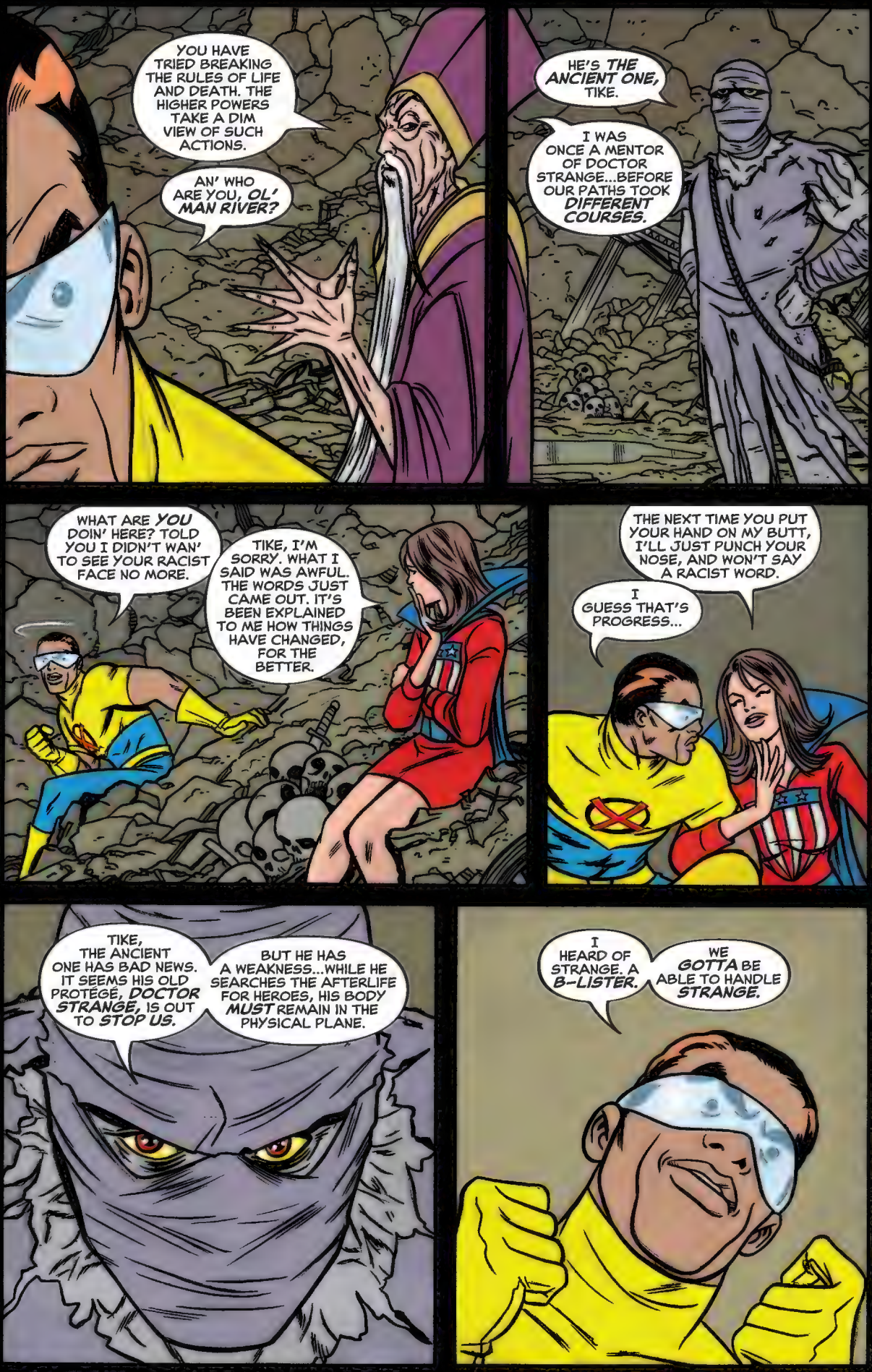
ANT-MAN!
DO YOU THINK YOUR DEAD SISTERS WILL HELP US?
PROBABLY. IF IT MEANS BEING CLOSE TO YOU, Oh SEXY ONE.
Y-YES.
NURSE SAID I COULD PLAY WITH MY MODEL SOLDIERS.
THAT'S COOL, ROBERT. SEEN ANT-MAN AROUND?
SLAM
GUESS NOT.
ROBERT?
...L. FRANK. ALSO KNOWN AS WHIZZER.
PERHAPS HE'LL HELP US?
HE CAN HARDLY HELP HIMSELF. SOME OF THESE GUYS' BRAINS TURN TO PEANUT BUTTER AFTER A WHILE.
WHAT'S THAT-- NOISE?
CLIP CLOP CLIP CLOP

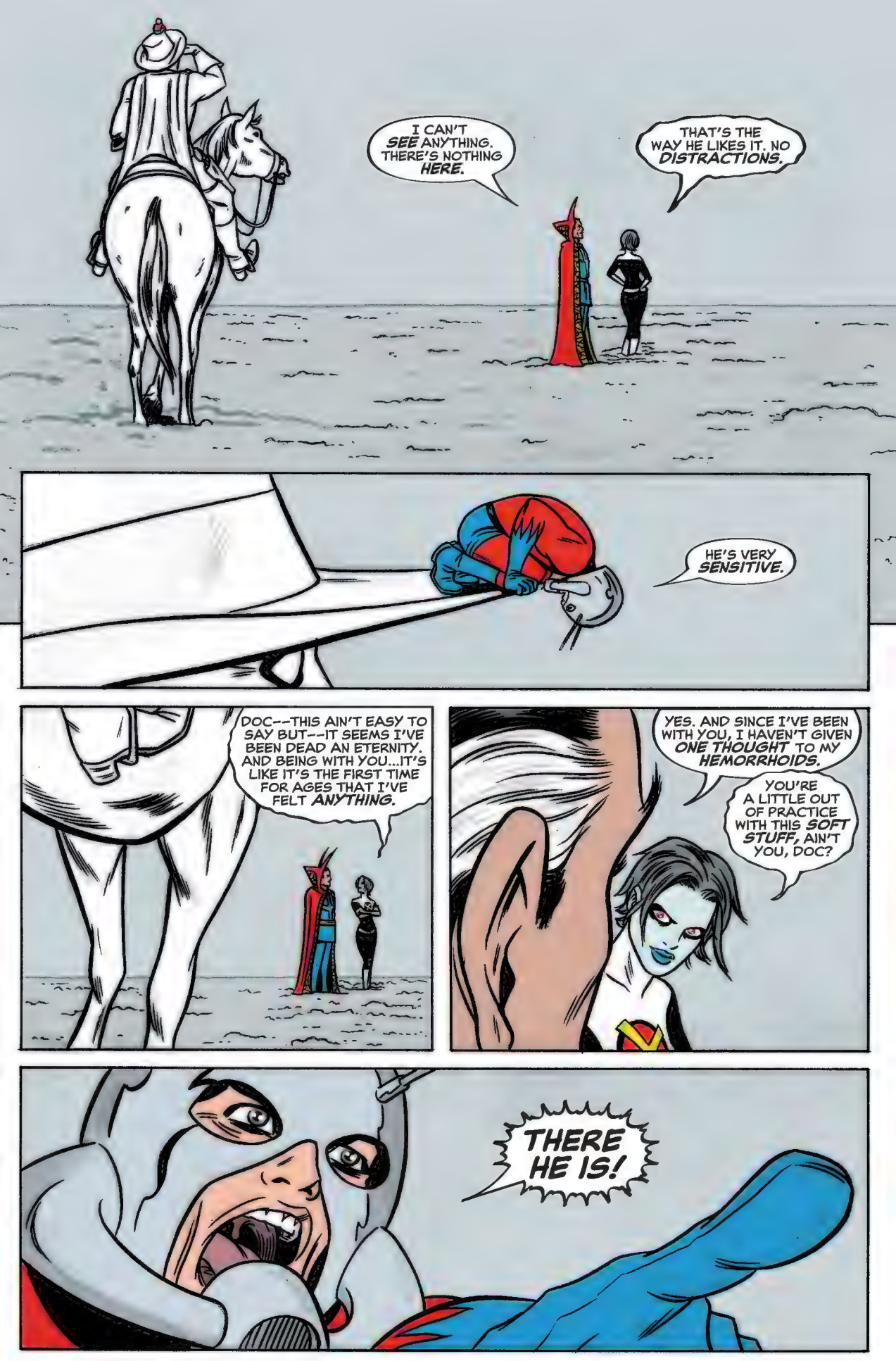
THE PHANTOM RIDER?
Uh-huh.
INTERESTING.
CARTER SLADE, MEET DOCTOR STRANGE.
HOWDY.
I'M LOOKING FOR HEROES TO FIGHT A BLOODTHIRSTY GANG OF DEAD VILLAINS.
Whoaaa!
YOU MEAN...A POSSE?

I CAN'T HELP YOU. THERE'S SO MUCH TO BE DONE HERE.
D'YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY MONSTERS LURK IN THIS ONE CARPET?
COME ON, SCOTT. HELP US AND THERE'S A CHANCE YOU'LL GET TO BE ALIVE AGAIN.
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE DIED. D'YOU THINK I WOULD'VE BEEN KILLED OFF IF I HADN'T HAD A SIZE ISSUE?
Uh-oh! HERE COMES ANOTHER ONE!
ANT-MAN-- YOU'RE BIGGER THAN THIS.

GRAN'MA, IT'S ME...
YO' AWAKE, GRAN'MA?
GRAN'MA?
AIEEE!
N-NO...


N-NO!
HE'S HAVING A BAD ONE.
LEAVE HIM! IF HE'S AWOKEN TOO SUDDENLY, HE COULD BE PLUNGED INTO AN EVEN LOWER DEPTH OF HELL.
PITIFUL ONE, IF I MIGHT HAVE A TOUCH OF YOUR CREME DU PROFUNDIS.
Hmmm... hmmm.
GRANDMA! ALABAMA! THE CROSSES--- O-OH, THE CROSSES!
EASY. IT'S OVER NOW.
HOW LONG DID IT LAST, TIKE?
FELT LIKE... IT ALL WENT ON FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS.
THAT'S NOT SO TERRIBLE. I ONCE EXPERIENCED TWO HUNDRED YEARS' SUBJECTIVE TIME OF THE THING STICKING MY HEAD DOWN A TOILET.
I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE THIS LOW. I DID GOOD WHEN I WAS ALIVE. I WAS A HERO. I WAS ON LETTERMAN.


YOU HAVE TRIED BREAKING THE RULES OF LIFE AND DEATH. THE HIGHER POWERS TAKE A DIM VIEW OF SUCH ACTIONS.
AN' WHO ARE YOU, OL' MAN RIVER?
HE'S THE ANCIENT ONE, TIKE.
I WAS ONCE A MENTOR OF DOCTOR STRANGE...BEFORE OUR PATHS TOOK DIFFERENT COURSES.
WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' HERE? TOLD YOU I DIDN'T WAN' TO SEE YOUR RACIST FACE NO MORE.
TIKE, I'M SORRY. WHAT I SAID WAS AWFUL. THE WORDS JUST CAME OUT. IT'S BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED, FOR THE BETTER.
THE NEXT TIME YOU PUT YOUR HAND ON MY BUTT, I'LL JUST PUNCH YOUR NOSE, AND WON'T SAY A RACIST WORD.
I GUESS THAT'S PROGRESS...
TIKE, THE ANCIENT ONE HAS BAD NEWS. IT SEEMS HIS OLD PROTÉGÉ, DOCTOR STRANGE, IS OUT TO STOP US.
BUT HE HAS A WEAKNESS...WHILE HE SEARCHES THE AFTERLIFE FOR HEROES, HIS BODY MUST REMAIN IN THE PHYSICAL PLANE.
I HEARD OF STRANGE. A B-LISTER.
WE GOTTA BE ABLE TO HANDLE STRANGE.


I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING. THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
THAT'S THE WAY HE LIKES IT. NO DISTRACTIONS.
HE'S VERY SENSITIVE.
DOC--THIS AIN'T EASY TO SAY BUT--IT SEEMS I'VE BEEN DEAD AN ETERNITY. AND BEING WITH YOU...IT'S LIKE IT'S THE FIRST TIME FOR AGES THAT I'VE FELT ANYTHING.
YES. AND SINCE I'VE BEEN WITH YOU, I HAVEN'T GIVEN ONE THOUGHT TO MY HEMORRHOIDS.
YOU'RE A LITTLE OUT OF PRACTICE WITH THIS SOFT STUFF, AIN'T YOU, DOC?
THERE HE IS!

GUY? YOU OKAY, GUY? IT'S ME.
GO AWAY.
GUY--THERE'S TROUBLE. WE'RE GETTING HEROES TOGETHER TO FIX IT. IT'LL BE LIKE THE OLD DAYS. X-STATIX. REMEMBER?
WHERE'S TIKE?
TIKE'S IN THE OTHER PLACE.
MR. SMITH? I'M DOCTOR STRANGE.
I DON'T NEED A DOCTOR! WHO SAYS I NEED A DOCTOR! I HATE DOCTORS!
Ughkk!-- OFF ME!
EASY, PARDNER.
THAT'S THE SHERIFF YOU'RE MANHANDLING.

DELI 24 DELI
THAT'S A VERY GENEROUS OFFER, MR. RICHARDS, BUT I'M HAPPY IN MY CURRENT POSITION.
I'M SURE THE BAXTER BUILDING WOULD PRESENT AN INTERESTING CHALLENGE... BUT MY LIFE WITH DOCTOR STRANGE IS ONE LONG INTERESTING CHALLENGE.
EXCUSE ME, I MUST--
UGNHG!

DEAD A LONG TIME PART TWO

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MARVEL
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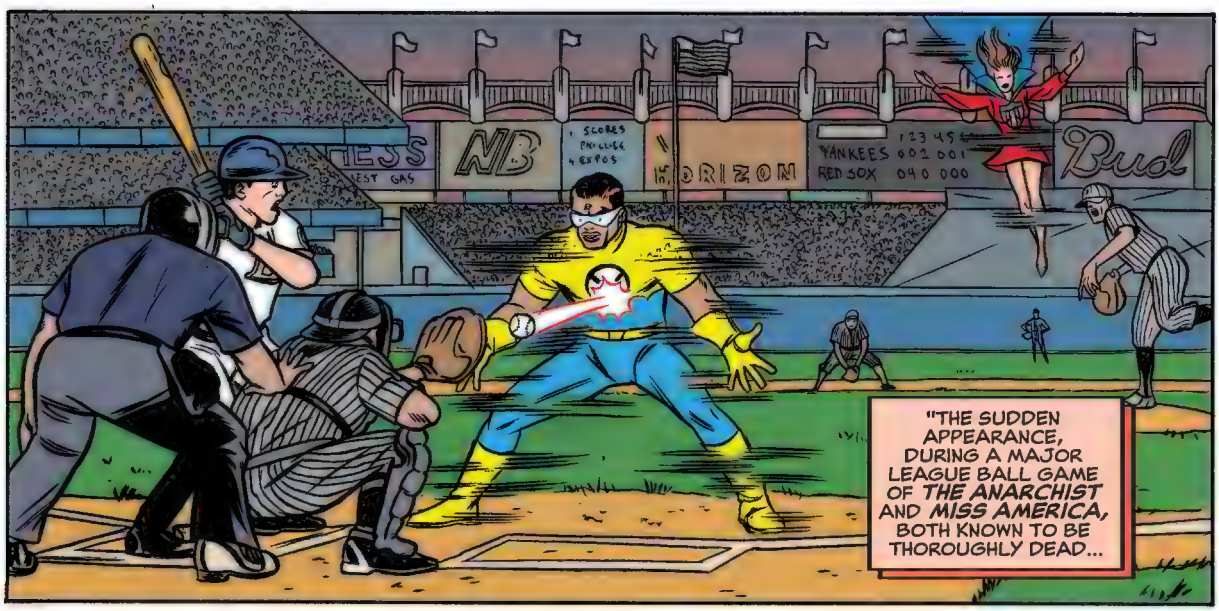
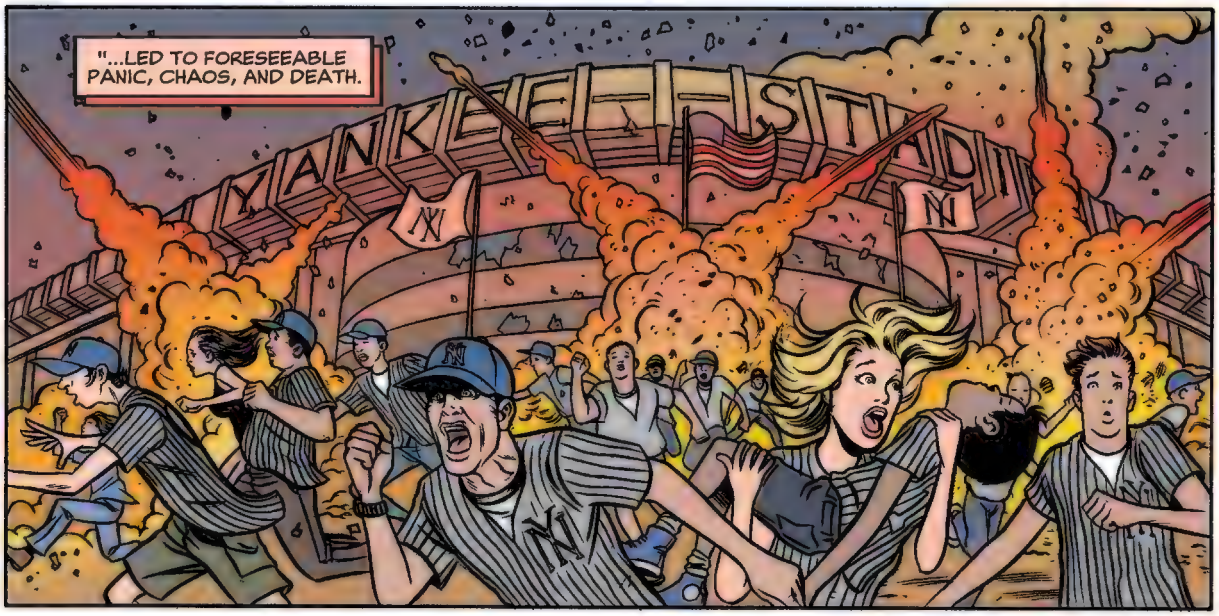
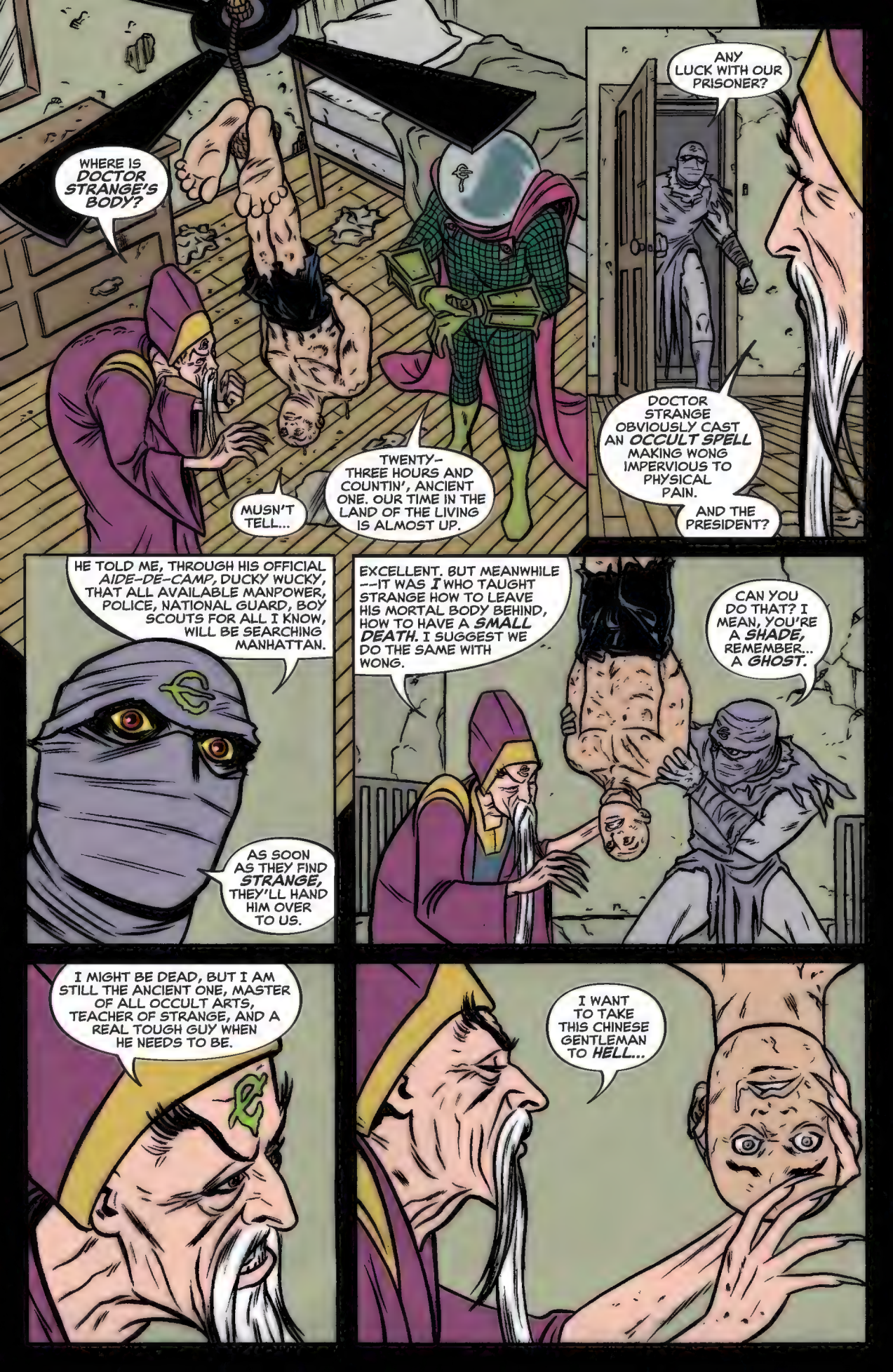
3 of 5
PETER MILLIGAN
NICK DRAGOTTA
MIKE ALLRED
X-STATIX Presents:
DEADGIRL


NB
HORIZON
YANKEES 001 001
RED SOX 040 000
Bud
"THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE, DURING A MAJOR LEAGUE BALL GAME OF THE ANARCHIST AND MISS AMERICA, BOTH KNOWN TO BE THOROUGHLY DEAD...


"...LED TO FORESEEABLE PANIC, CHAOS, AND DEATH.
YANKEE STADIUM

"KRAVEN THE HUNTER'S BLOODTHIRSTY EXPLOITS ON WALL STREET LED TO SIMILAR, IF MORE REVOLTING, SCENES."

AND THE BIGGEST CRASH IN THE MARKET SINCE THE 1920's.
AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING, MR. PRESIDENT.
MR. PRESIDENT CAN'T HEAR YOU. MY NAME'S DUCKY WUCKY.
OF COURSE, DUCKY WUCKY, DO FORGIVE ME. TELL THE PRESIDENT THINGS WILL GET WORSE.
YOU CAN'T KILL US BECAUSE WE'RE ALREADY DEAD. YOU CAN'T THREATEN US BECAUSE WE'RE ALREADY IN HELL.
TELL HIM HE HAS TO AGREE TO OUR TERMS. WE WANT LIFE.
THERE'S ONE MAN ALIVE WITH THE OCCULT SKILLS TO BESTOW UPON US THE JOYS OF THE LIVING.
AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP US FIND HIM...


WHERE IS DOCTOR STRANGE'S BODY?
MUSN'T TELL...
TWENTY-THREE HOURS AND COUNTIN', ANCIENT ONE. OUR TIME IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING IS ALMOST UP.
ANY LUCK WITH OUR PRISONER?
DOCTOR STRANGE OBVIOUSLY CAST AN OCCULT SPELL MAKING WONG IMPERVIOUS TO PHYSICAL PAIN.
AND THE PRESIDENT?
HE TOLD ME, THROUGH HIS OFFICIAL AIDE-DE-CAMP, DUCKY WUCKY, THAT ALL AVAILABLE MANPOWER, POLICE, NATIONAL GUARD, BOY SCOUTS FOR ALL I KNOW, WILL BE SEARCHING MANHATTAN.
AS SOON AS THEY FIND STRANGE, THEY'LL HAND HIM OVER TO US.
EXCELLENT. BUT MEANWHILE --IT WAS I WHO TAUGHT STRANGE HOW TO LEAVE HIS MORTAL BODY BEHIND, HOW TO HAVE A SMALL DEATH. I SUGGEST WE DO THE SAME WITH WONG.
CAN YOU DO THAT? I MEAN, YOU'RE A SHADE, REMEMBER... A GHOST.
I MIGHT BE DEAD, BUT I AM STILL THE ANCIENT ONE, MASTER OF ALL OCCULT ARTS, TEACHER OF STRANGE, AND A REAL TOUGH GUY WHEN HE NEEDS TO BE.
I WANT TO TAKE THIS CHINESE GENTLEMAN TO HELL...

HELL? TIKE'S IN HELL?
AFRAID SO, GUY.
BUT WHY? HE WASN'T ALL THAT BAD. A LOOSE CANNON, MAYBE. CYNICAL, YES. BUT IS THAT ENOUGH TO GET YOU DAMNED?
GUESS SO.
BUT YOU SHOULD SEE SOME OF THE SPECIMENS AROUND THIS PLACE. I CAUGHT RICHARD NIXON PLAYING GOLF THE OTHER DAY. NIXON'S IN HEAVEN, TIKE ALICAR'S IN HELL.
EXPLAIN THAT!
LIFE'S NOT FAIR. WHY SHOULD DEATH BE?
YOU AND TIKE HAD A THING GOING, DIDN'T YOU? BEFORE THE... END?

IF YOU HELP US...YOU MIGHT GET PROMOTED OUT OF HERE...THEN YOU CAN HELP TIKE OUT OF THE HOLE HE'S IN...
IF TIKE CONTINUES TO KEEP SUCH BAD COMPANY, HE'S BOUND TO SLIDE EVEN DEEPER DOWN.
YOU MAKE THE WHOLE MYSTERIOUS WONDER OF HEAVEN AND HELL SOUND LIKE A GAME OF SNAKES AND LADDERS.
AS GOOD A METAPHOR AS ANY.
HOW DO I GET PROMOTED? WHO GIVES YOU PROMOTION?
DOC?
NO ONE ACTUALLY GIVES IT. BUT SOMETIMES... THROUGH A MYSTICAL PROCESS OF OSMOSIS... THROUGH THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE...IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS MISSED OR WANTED BACK BADLY ENOUGH...
ALL THE LAWS OF PHYSICS ARE BROKEN. LOGIC IS TURNED ON ITS HEAD. AND THE DEAD LIVE AGAIN.
WILL I GET TO SEE EDIE? EDIE SAWYER? I'VE LOOKED ALL OVER FOR EDIE BUT CAN'T FIND HER...
NOW I KNOW THAT EDIE CAN'T BE IN HELL.

WE HAVE DRAGGED HIM THROUGH THE PIT OF IMAGINARY SCABS. THE DUNGEON OF SEXUAL INADEQUACIES. AND THE HALLS OF BOREDOM...
AND STILL HE WON'T BREAK.
IS HE HUMAN?
WAIT...
DOCTOR STRANGE...GATHERS HIS FORCES...
WHILE HIS MORTAL BODY LIES HIDDEN IN THE LIVING PLANE...HIS SPECTRAL SHADE MOVES INELUCTABLY THROUGH THE LAND OF THE DEAD...AND GETS CLOSER...

HE'LL NEVER HAVE THE STONES TO COME THIS FAR DOWN INTO HELL. I KNOW THESE HERO TYPES...FUNDAMENTALLY LAZY AND GUTLESS...
DON'T BE SO SURE. DISPATCH KRAVEN AND MYSTERIO TO GO WATCH THE BALEFUL ELEVATOR SHAFTS OF GEHENNA...
AND WITHOUT YOUR *CREME DU PROFUNDIS* WE HAVE NO WAY OF TRAVELING TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING.
SO UNTIL STRANGE HAS BEEN STOPPED...IT MUST NOT BE LEFT UNGUARDED. COME, PITIFUL ONE, WE MUST ATTEND TO MY ERSTWHILE STUDENT AND HIS PALE LITTLE HELPER.
HEAR THAT, MADELINE? YOU STAY HOME AND LOOK AFTER THE *MAKEUP*.
ISN'T THAT A LITTLE...
--SEXIST? TOO RIGHT, BABY. BUT DON'T WORRY, TIKE WILL KEEP YOU *COMPANY*.
GIVE YOU TIME TO SHOW ME HOW SORRY YOU ARE FOR BEING A RACIST.
REFORMED RACIST.
I THINK THE SOONER WE FIND MY ERSTWHILE PUPIL'S MORTAL BODY THE *BETTER*...

YOU'RE SURE EDIE ISN'T IN HELL?
WITH SOME WOMEN...PART OF THEIR BEING IN HEAVEN IS HAVING NO MEN AROUND. MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOU COULD NEVER FIND HER.
BUT EDIE LIKED MEN. SOMETIMES SHE LIKED THEM TOO MUCH.
IF YOU HELP US--MAYBE WE CAN HELP YOU FIND HER.
HOW ABOUT YOU FIND EDIE SAWYER--AND I'LL JOIN YOUR TEAM.
PSSST STRANGE. OVER HERE...
MY DEAD SISTERS CAN SEARCH FOR EDIE--WHILE WE GO AFTER THE PITIFUL ONE.
IS GUY SMITH WORTH ALL THIS TROUBLE? THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER DEAD HEROES DOWN HERE...AND I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN HIM WITH A VACUUM CLEANER IN HIS HAND...
I MEAN, HOW'S SMITH GONNA REACT WHEN A REALLY BIG CARPET BUG COMES HIS WAY?

I'M BANKING ON SMITH CONTROLLING TIKE ALICAR. HE USED TO BE THE ANARCHIST'S TEAM LEADER.
THE PHANTOM RIDER'S COMING BACK! YAAAAY!
EDIE SAWYER. MY LOVELY EDIE.
I'LL BE HONEST WITH YOU, DEAD GIRL--I'M A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT THE STATE OF ANT-MAN'S MIND.
YOU'RE A DOCTOR--CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?
YOU MEAN APART FROM PRAYING TO MIGHTY VISHANTI?

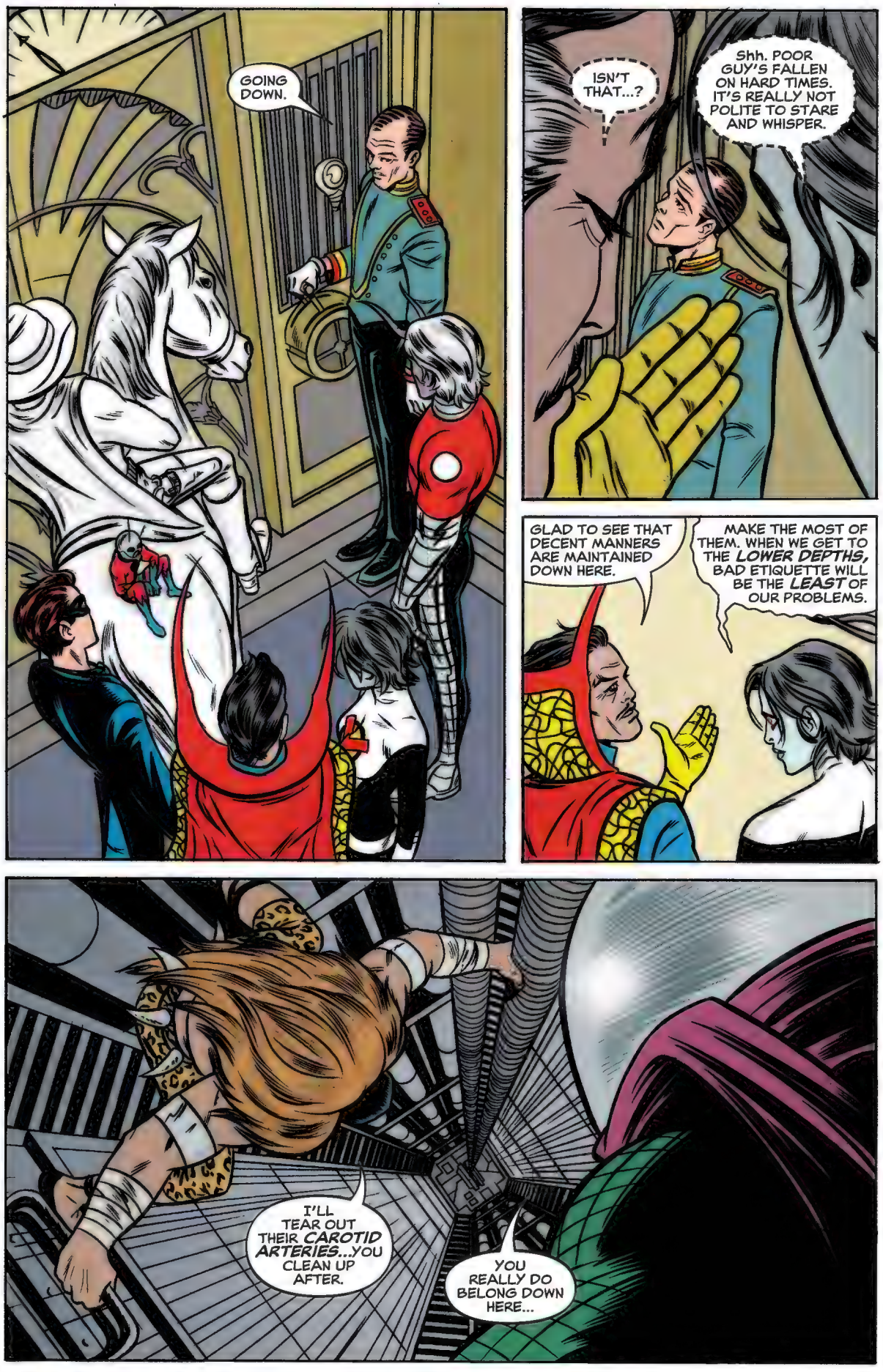
SHERIFF, AH DONE FOUND US ANOTHER MEMBER OF OUR POSSE.
NAME OF THE PIANO PLAYER!
DON'T SHOOT ME! DON'T SHOOT ME!
THAT'S HIS TAGLINE. "DON'T SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER", GEDDIT? AIN'T HE TH' ROOTIN' TOOTINEST?
ANYONE LIKE A TUNE? RAGTIME? CLASSICAL? MODERN JAZZ?
NOT RIGHT NOW, PIANO PLAYER.
DEAD GIRL, I THINK WE SHOULD GET MOVING. WHICH WAY IS DOWN?
THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK.

HELL'S COLD. OR IT'S HOT. IT'S PAINFUL...OR IT'S BORING. IT'S...Oh, IT'S HELL.
YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S TOO AWFUL. I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE. I WAS THE NATION'S SWEETHEART.
I WAS MY NATION'S SWEETHEART.
IT'S A PITY--
--THAT TWO PEOPLE LIKE US...
...CAN'T MAKE THE ETERNITIES OF DESPAIR A LITTLE EASIER TO SWALLOW...
THAT WORD...
MISCEGENATION...?
YES, THAT ONE, WHAT'S IT MEAN AGAIN?
IT MEANS...

OW! OW!
THAT REALLY, REALLY HURT!
AND--IT STUNK. SHEESH! IT MADE ME WANNA THROW UP.
Y'ALL CAN ALMOST HEAR THOSE GODS OF HELL SNIGGERING, CAN'T YOU?
THE ONE GOOD HUMAN THANG THAT PEOPLE LIKE US MIGHT FIND TO MAKE OUR TIME IN THIS AWFUL PLACE MORE BEARABLE... AND IT'S TURNED INTO SOMETHING PAINFUL.
AND STINKY.
YOU KNOW... THERE'S PLENTY OF THAT MAGIC CLAY LEFT-- YOU AND ME COULD HAVE OURSELVES A VACATION IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GUARDING IT, TIKE. NOT STEALING IT.
WE'RE IN HELL, BABY-- WHAT CAN THEY DO TO US?

TIKE! I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT!
NO PRIZES FOR BEIN' GOOD DOWN HERE--
GNNGG!
GRRR!
AAHHHHH!
OGGHH!
--OFF ME!
ARGGHH!
TH-THAT WAS-- INTENSE.
A-ALMOST AS MUCH FUN AS...KISSING.
WANNA GO AGAIN?

I'VE REALLY HAD TO PULL SOME STRINGS TO GET WONG IN HERE. BUT IT SHOULD FINALLY BREAK HIM.
WH-WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
YOU DO WELL TO TREMBLE LIKE A GIRL, PITIFUL ONE.
WONG HAS ENTERED-- THE HALL OF SELF!
ARRRGH!
UGHNN!
HELLO, WONG. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
JEAN-PAUL SARTRE WAS ALL WRONG.
HELL ISN'T OTHER PEOPLE...


GOING DOWN.
ISN'T THAT...?
Shh. POOR GUY'S FALLEN ON HARD TIMES. IT'S REALLY NOT POLITE TO STARE AND WHISPER.
GLAD TO SEE THAT DECENT MANNERS ARE MAINTAINED DOWN HERE.
MAKE THE MOST OF THEM. WHEN WE GET TO THE LOWER DEPTHS, BAD ETIQUETTE WILL BE THE LEAST OF OUR PROBLEMS.
I'LL TEAR OUT THEIR CAROTID ARTERIES...YOU CLEAN UP AFTER.
YOU REALLY DO BELONG DOWN HERE...

LISTEN, DEAD GIRL, IT'S GOING TO BE DANGEROUS FROM NOW ON-- THERE'S A REAL CHANCE NONE OF US WILL RETURN FROM WHERE WE'RE GOING...
YOU'RE SUCH AN IRREPRESSIBLE OPTIMIST, DOC. THAT'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT YOU.
NOT LITERALLY. I MEAN, IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING. WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?
YOU'RE NOT PUTTING A SPELL ON ME, ARE YOU, DOC?
I RATHER THINK YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S PUT A SPELL ON ME. WHEN GUY SMITH MENTIONED THAT YOU'D HAD A THING WITH TIKE ALICAR, I FELT IT. A TWINGE. A STAB IN THE HEART.
INCREDIBLE AS IT SEEMS, I-- I THINK I W-WAS... JE-JE--
JELLY?
JEALOUS.
SMASH!

INJUNS!
THE PITIFUL ONE SENDS HIS GREETINGS...
WHERE'S TIKE--?
--!
IF EBONY AND IVORY, CAN LIVE TOGETHER IN PERFECT--
G--!
WOKK

THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO ASK YOU, DEAD GIRL--CAN YOU BE KILLED DOWN HERE? AND IF YOU'RE KILLED, WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU?
JEALOUS?
OF TIKE AND ME?
EXCUSE ME ONE MOMENT, DEAD-GIRL.
SO POLITE...
BY THE POWER OF WEIRD WATOOMB...

BACK, BARBAROUS FELLOW--
Y-YES. THE ANCIENT ONE *SAID* YOUR POWERS WOULD NOT BE SO GREAT IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD...
POP
THE *ANCIENT*--?
DOC!
Hh-hhhh!

WHAT'S THAT STUFF?
N-- NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.
HOLD ON--
I'D RECOGNIZE THAT TELEPORTATION-- MATTER ANYWHERE!
EDIE!
HELLO, HANDSOME.

MOIRA-- YOU FOUND U-GO GIRL!
AYE-- AND YE WOULDNAE BELIEVE WHERE!
HOP IN, CHAPS. THIS ELEVATOR'S GETTING CROWDED.
WAIT! I NEED TO HEAR ABOUT THE ANCIENT--
POP
POP
POP
--!
THAT'S SOME PARTY TRICK.

DEAD A LONG TIME PART THREE

WRITER PETER MILLIGAN • ARTISTS NICK DRAGOTTA & MIKE ALLRED
COLORS LAURA ALLRED • LETTERING BLAMBOT'S NATE PIEKOS • ASSISTANT EDITOR MICHAEL D'CONNOR
CONSULTING EDITOR AXEL ALONSO • EDITOR WARREN SIMONS • EDITOR IN CHIEF JOE QUESADA • PUBLISHER DAN BUCKLEY

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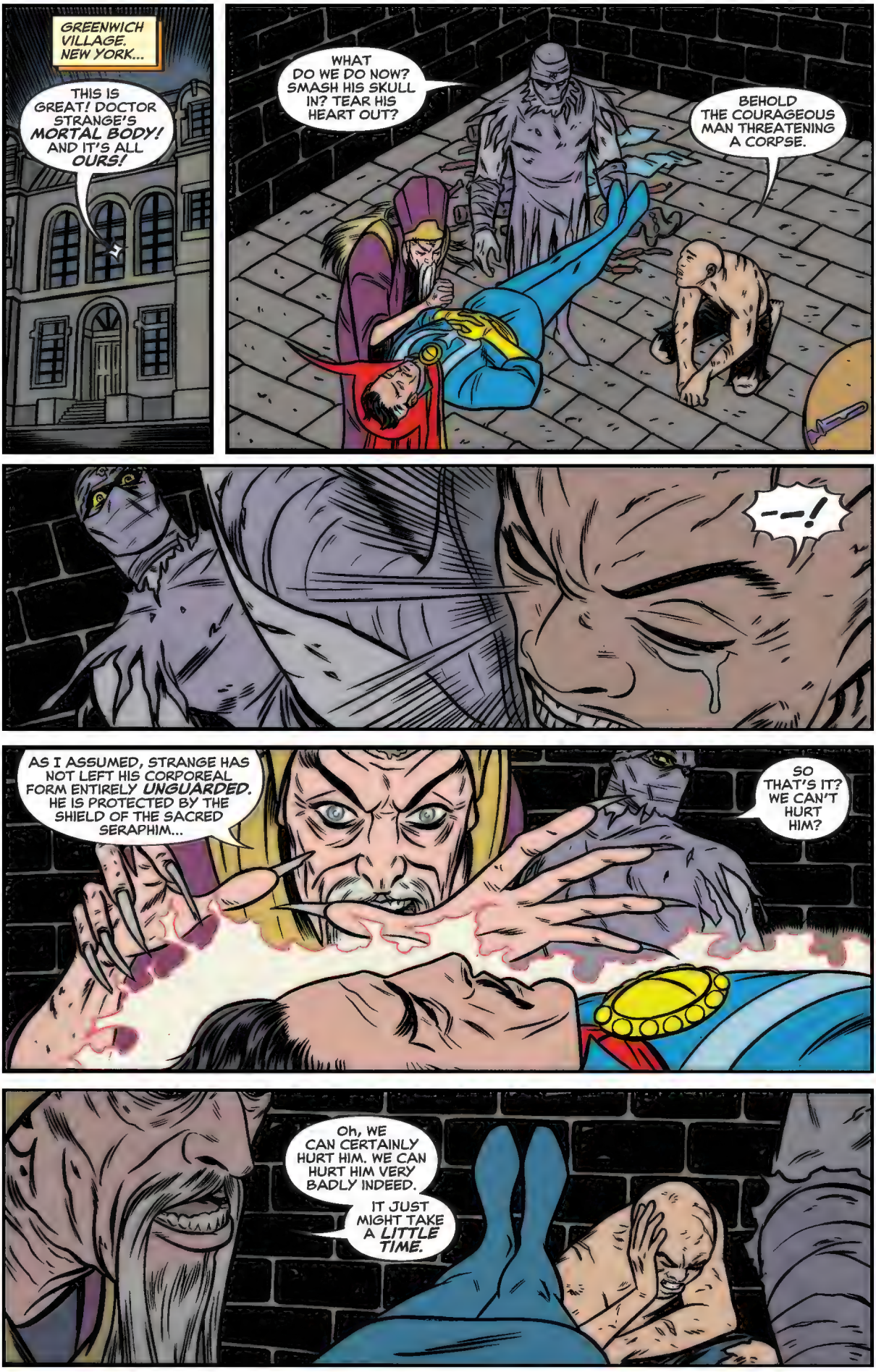
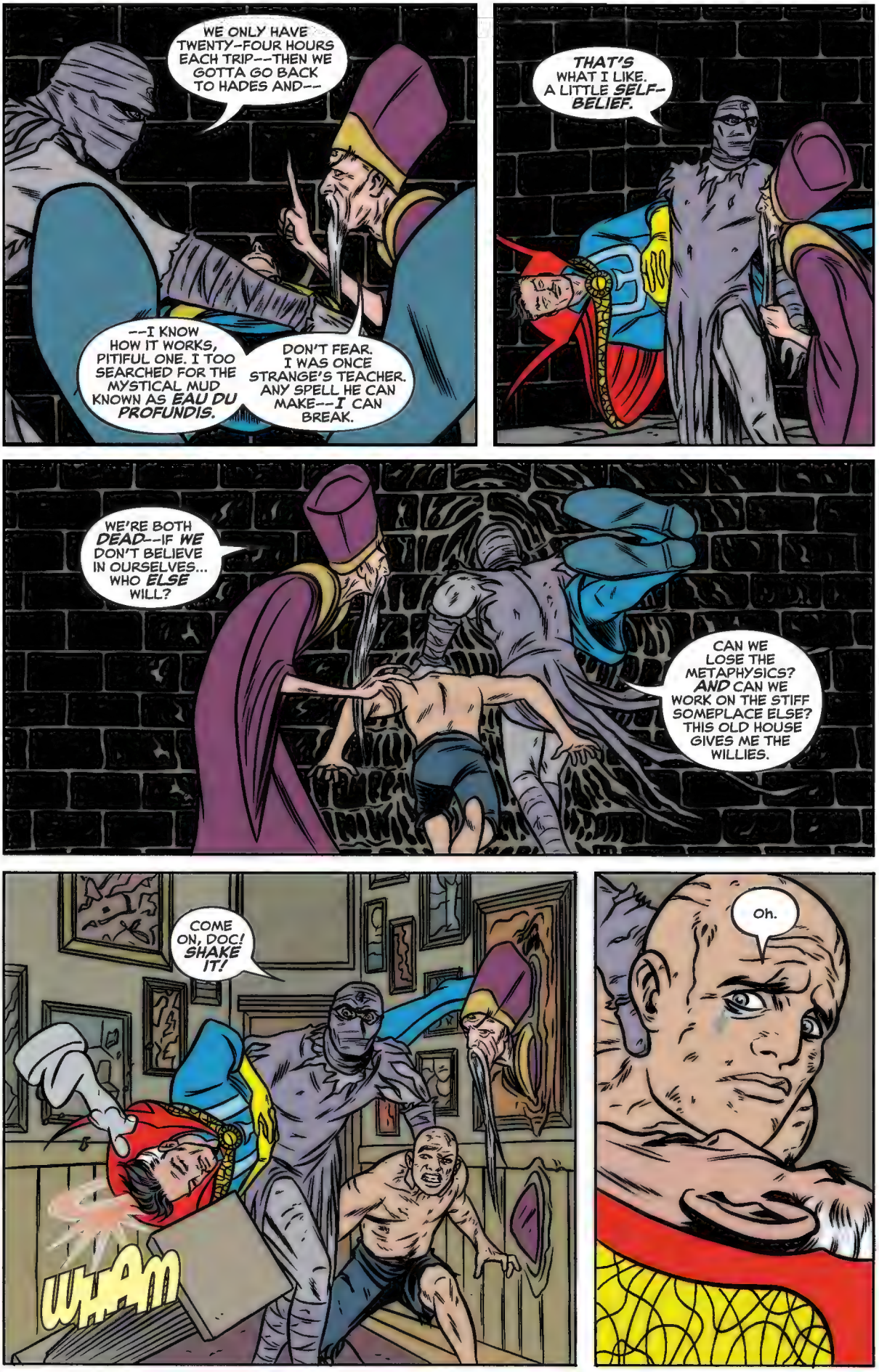
4 of 5
PETER MILLIGAN
NICK DRAGOTTA
MIKE ALLRED
X-STATIX Presents:
DEADGIRL
ALLRED M.D.


GREENWICH VILLAGE. NEW YORK...
THIS IS GREAT! DOCTOR STRANGE'S MORTAL BODY! AND IT'S ALL OURS!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW? SMASH HIS SKULL IN? TEAR HIS HEART OUT?
BEHOLD THE COURAGEOUS MAN THREATENING A CORPSE.
---!
AS I ASSUMED, STRANGE HAS NOT LEFT HIS CORPOREAL FORM ENTIRELY UNGUARDED. HE IS PROTECTED BY THE SHIELD OF THE SACRED SERAPHIM...
SO THAT'S IT? WE CAN'T HURT HIM?
Oh, WE CAN CERTAINLY HURT HIM. WE CAN HURT HIM VERY BADLY INDEED.
IT JUST MIGHT TAKE A LITTLE TIME.


WE ONLY HAVE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS EACH TRIP--THEN WE GOTTA GO BACK TO HADES AND--
--I KNOW HOW IT WORKS, PITIFUL ONE. I TOO SEARCHED FOR THE MYSTICAL MUD KNOWN AS EAU DU PROFUNDIS.
DON'T FEAR. I WAS ONCE STRANGE'S TEACHER. ANY SPELL HE CAN MAKE--I CAN BREAK.
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE. A LITTLE SELF-BELIEF.
WE'RE BOTH DEAD--IF WE DON'T BELIEVE IN OURSELVES... WHO ELSE WILL?
CAN WE LOSE THE METAPHYSICS? AND CAN WE WORK ON THE STIFF SOMEPLACE ELSE? THIS OLD HOUSE GIVES ME THE WILLIES.
COME ON, DOC! SHAKE IT!
WHAM
Oh.

OH!
TROUSERS PINCHING?
N-NO...I THINK MY--- MY PERSONAL PROBLEM MUST BE FLARING UP AGAIN.
I TELL YOU, DEAD GIRL, WHEN YOU'VE A BAD CASE OF HEMORRHOIDS YOU DON'T NEED TO CROSS THE RIVER STYX TO KNOW WHAT HELL'S LIKE.
DEAD A LONG TIME
PART FOUR
WRITER PETER MILLIGAN • ARTISTS NICK DRAGOTTA & MIKE ALLRED
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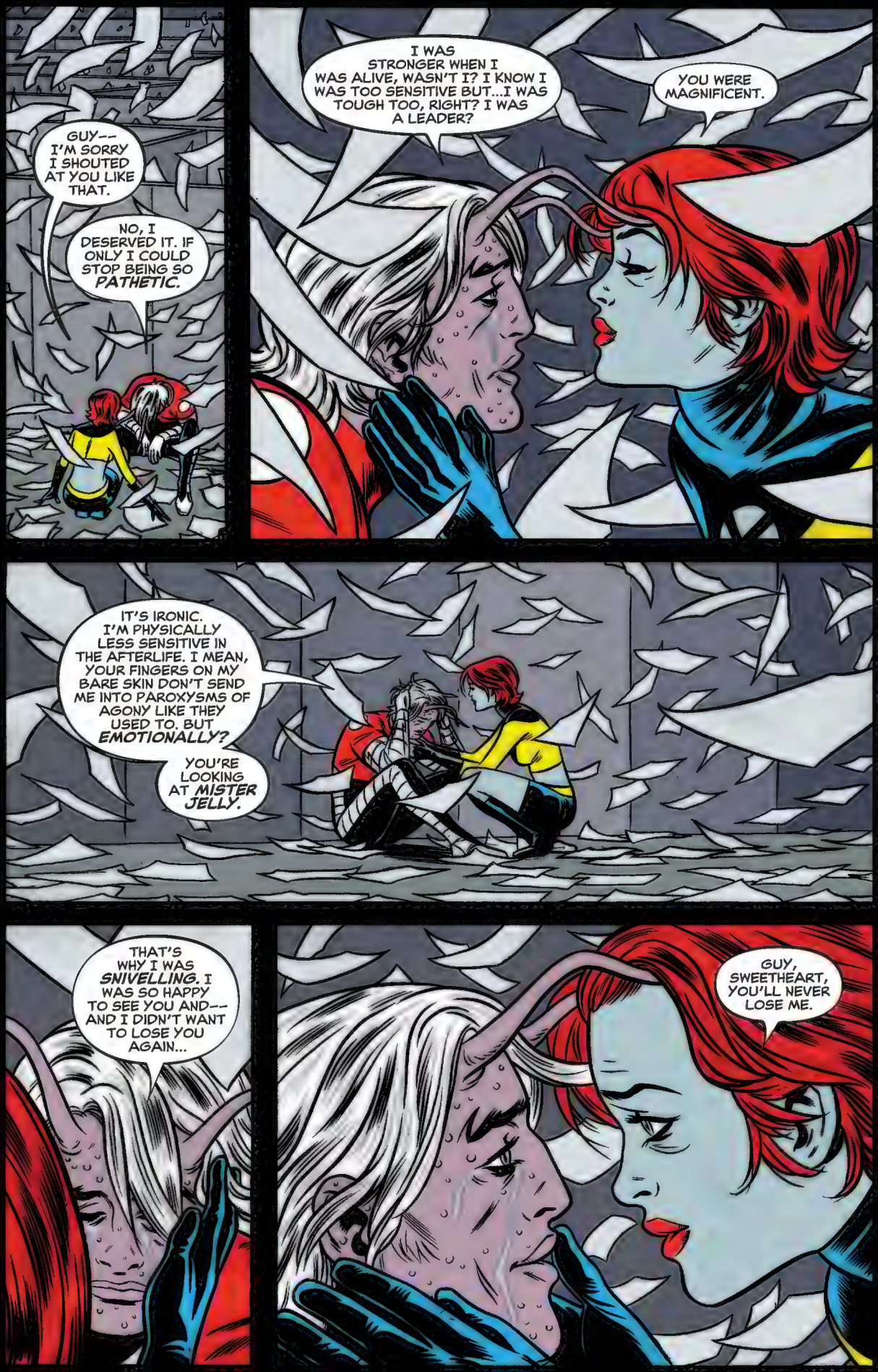
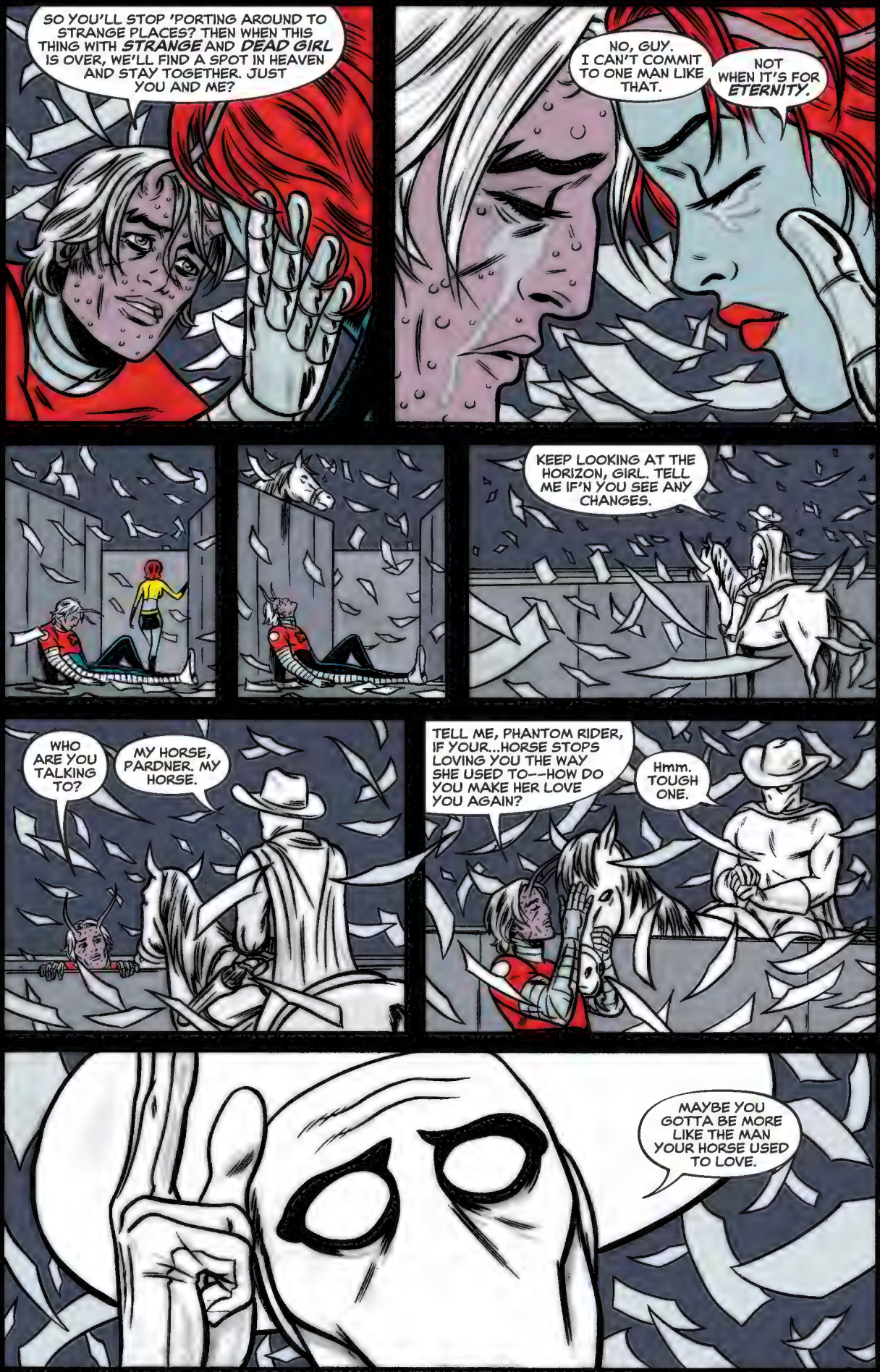
WHERE IN THE NAME OF KALUMESH ARE WE?
MOIRA TOLD ME YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE PITIFUL ONE'S ADDRESS.
SO I BROUGHT YOU TO THE LEVEL OF DEAD BUREAUCRATS.
YOU GET A LOT OF BUREAUCRATS DOWN IN HELL.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EVERYONE IN HELL CAN BE FOUND IN THESE FLOORS BUT--
EDIE--
EDIE, I--
--I THINK WE SHOULD TALK.
IN A MINUTE, GUY. I'M BUSY RIGHT NOW.
BUT...
THE FILING SYSTEM IS THOROUGHLY INSANE, OF COURSE...
Hmm.
SO, IT'S IMPORTAN--
EDIE, I REALLY THINK WE...
IF YOU DON'T STOP SNIVELLING, I'M GOING TO TELEPORT AWAY AND NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

YOU WERE SAYING, THE FILING SYSTEM?
YOU NEED INSIDE HELP TO FIND ANYTHING.
HOPEFULLY THAT'S WHERE MY DEAD SISTERS CAME IN.
EXCUSE ME, MA'AM. RECKON YOUR BOYFRIEND DONE GONE CRAZIER THAN A FIVE-WHEELED WAGON.
GUY WAS NEVER QUITE THIS SENSITIVE WHEN HE WAS ALIVE.
IT'S ONE OF THE REASONS I COULDN'T STAY WITH HIM. I'D BETTER GO AFTER THE POOR PUPPY. IF HE GETS LOST IN THIS LABYRINTH WE'LL NEVER FIND HIM.
DON'T WORRY, DOC. THINGS TEND TO GO LOOPIER THE LOWER YOU GET.
IF IT STARTS MAKING TOO MUCH SENSE, IT PROBABLY MEANS WE BELONG HERE.

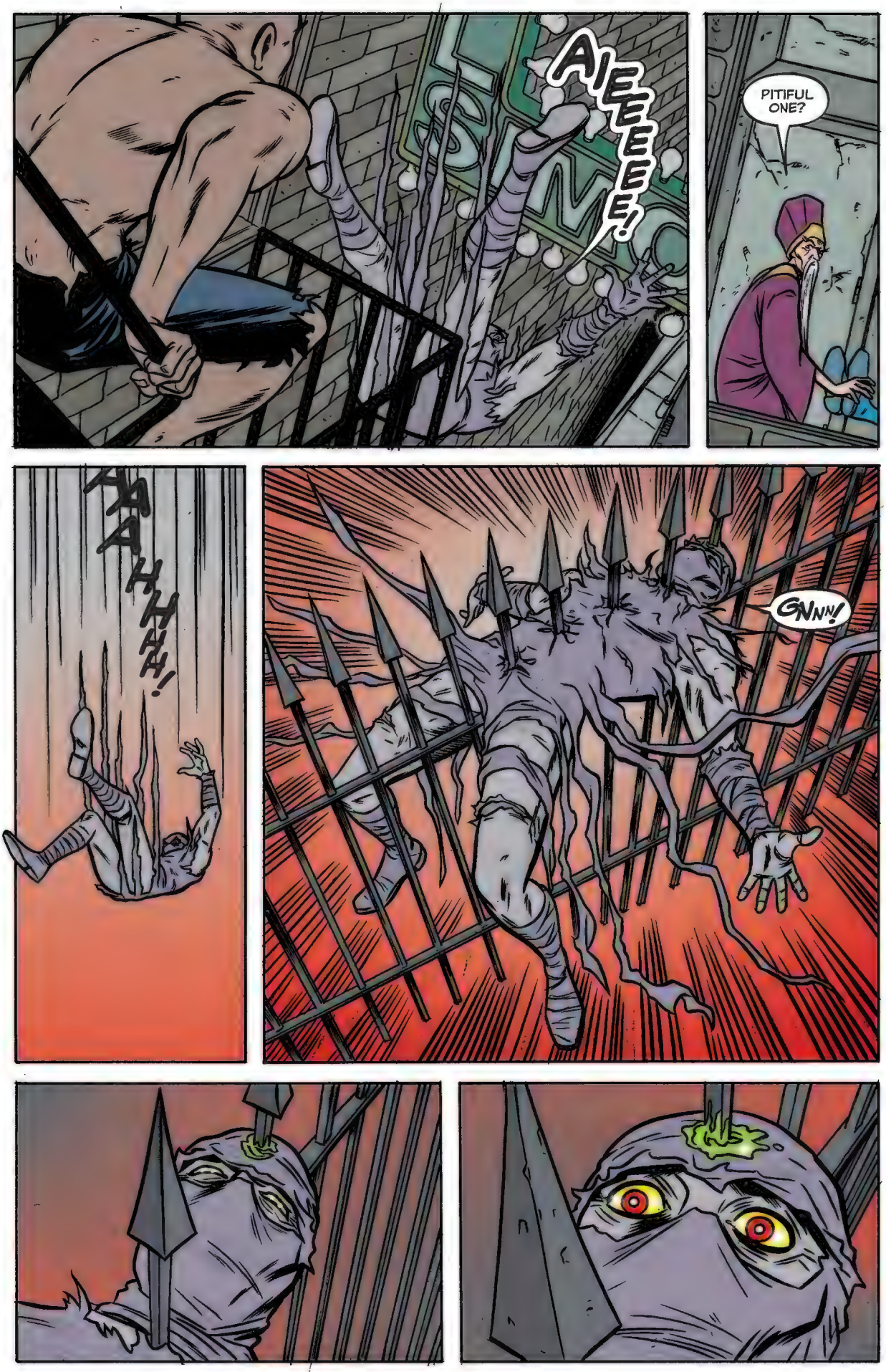

GUY-- I'M SORRY I SHOUTED AT YOU LIKE THAT.
NO, I DESERVED IT. IF ONLY I COULD STOP BEING SO PATHETIC.
I WAS STRONGER WHEN I WAS ALIVE, WASN'T I? I KNOW I WAS TOO SENSITIVE BUT...I WAS TOUGH TOO, RIGHT? I WAS A LEADER?
YOU WERE MAGNIFICENT.
IT'S IRONIC. I'M PHYSICALLY LESS SENSITIVE IN THE AFTERLIFE. I MEAN, YOUR FINGERS ON MY BARE SKIN DON'T SEND ME INTO PAROXYSMS OF AGONY LIKE THEY USED TO. BUT EMOTIONALLY?
YOU'RE LOOKING AT MISTER JELLY.
THAT'S WHY I WAS SNIVELLING. I WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU AND-- AND I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE YOU AGAIN...
GUY, SWEETHEART, YOU'LL NEVER LOSE ME.


SO YOU'LL STOP 'PORTING AROUND TO STRANGE PLACES? THEN WHEN THIS THING WITH STRANGE AND DEAD GIRL IS OVER, WE'LL FIND A SPOT IN HEAVEN AND STAY TOGETHER. JUST YOU AND ME?
NO, GUY. I CAN'T COMMIT TO ONE MAN LIKE THAT.
NOT WHEN IT'S FOR ETERNITY.
KEEP LOOKING AT THE HORIZON, GIRL. TELL ME IF'N YOU SEE ANY CHANGES.
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
MY HORSE, PARDNER. MY HORSE.
TELL ME, PHANTOM RIDER, IF YOUR...HORSE STOPS LOVING YOU THE WAY SHE USED TO--HOW DO YOU MAKE HER LOVE YOU AGAIN?
Hmm. TOUGH ONE.
MAYBE YOU GOTTA BE MORE LIKE THE MAN YOUR HORSE USED TO LOVE.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH, GIRLS. I KNOW HOW EXHAUSTING IT IS SPENDING TIME WITH THE BUREAUCRATS.
DID YOU LOCATE THE ABODE OF THE PITIFUL ONE?
THEY'RE TIRED. PROBABLY HAD TO DEAL WITH A HELL LOAD OF MIND-NUMBINGLY POINTLESS RED TAPE.
A SONG MIGHT PERK THEM UP. MAYBE A ROD STEWART TIMELESS CLASSIC!
TRY IT AND I'LL SHRINK DOWN AND SNAP YOUR WIRES.
IT'S NOT BUREAUCRATIC RED TAPE THAT TIRED OUT THE DEAD SISTERS. IT'S THE DEBILITATING EFFECT OF MILLIONS OF BUGS.
I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE ALARM--BUT THIS PLACE IS HOME TO ALL THE FILTHY, SCUMMY LICE OF THE UNDER-VERSE...

HOTEL SIMONS. LOWER EAST SIDE...
Uhh...IN THERE...CAREFUL DON'T...I SAID CAREFUL!
HOTEL SIMONS
CAREFUL, YOU FOOL!
WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF WE BRUISE HIM? SOON AS YOU DE-HEX THE BODY WE'LL BE HURTING IT SOME MORE.
WONG, YOU STAY RIGHT THERE.
THE MAN AT THE FRONT DESK LOOKED AT US SUSPICIOUSLY. YOU DON'T THINK HE'LL CALL THE POLICE?
ANCIENT ONE, YOU MIGHT BE A VENERABLE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC WAYS BUT YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE REAL WORLD.
ANY HOTEL THAT CHARGES BY THE HOUR DON'T CARE WHAT GOES ON IN THE ROOMS.
HEY!

G-GO DOWN--THE STINKING OESOPHAGUS OF CERBERUS... TO THE INDECENT MAW, THEN ASK FOR HOTEL SELF-LOATHING, ROOM NUMBER THIRTEEN...
I KNOW THE HOTEL SELF-LOATHING. IT'S A CHAIN. THEY'RE OPENING UP ALL OVER. EVERY ROOM NUMBERED THIRTEEN.
"PERFECT ADDRESS FOR A BOZO WHO'D CALL HIMSELF THE PITIFUL ONE!"
WONG! I'M GOING TO DRAG YOU ALL THE WAY TO HELL--
--AND BACK!
BHFF!

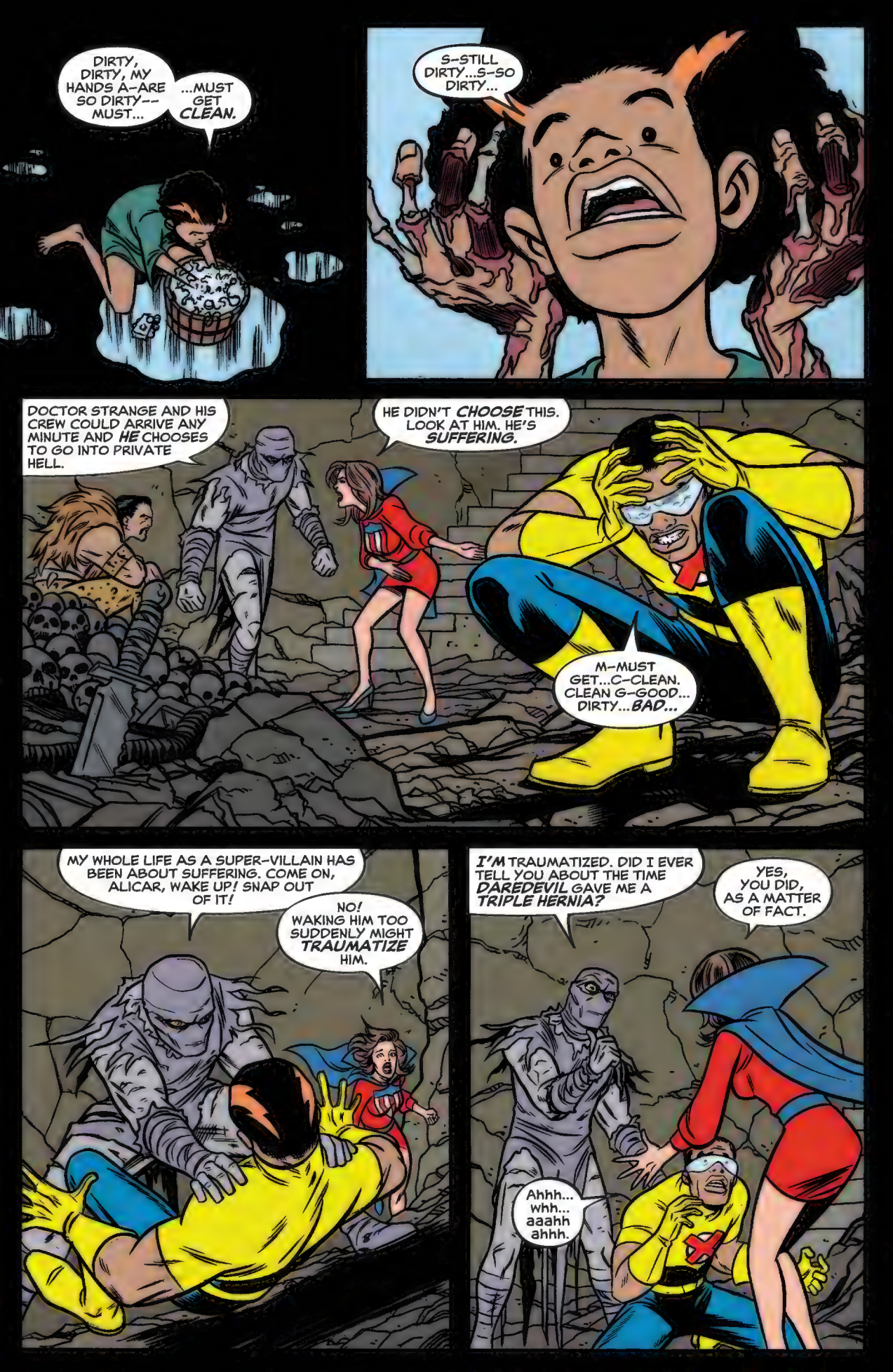

AIEEEEEE!
PITIFUL ONE?
AAAAHHHH!
GNNN!

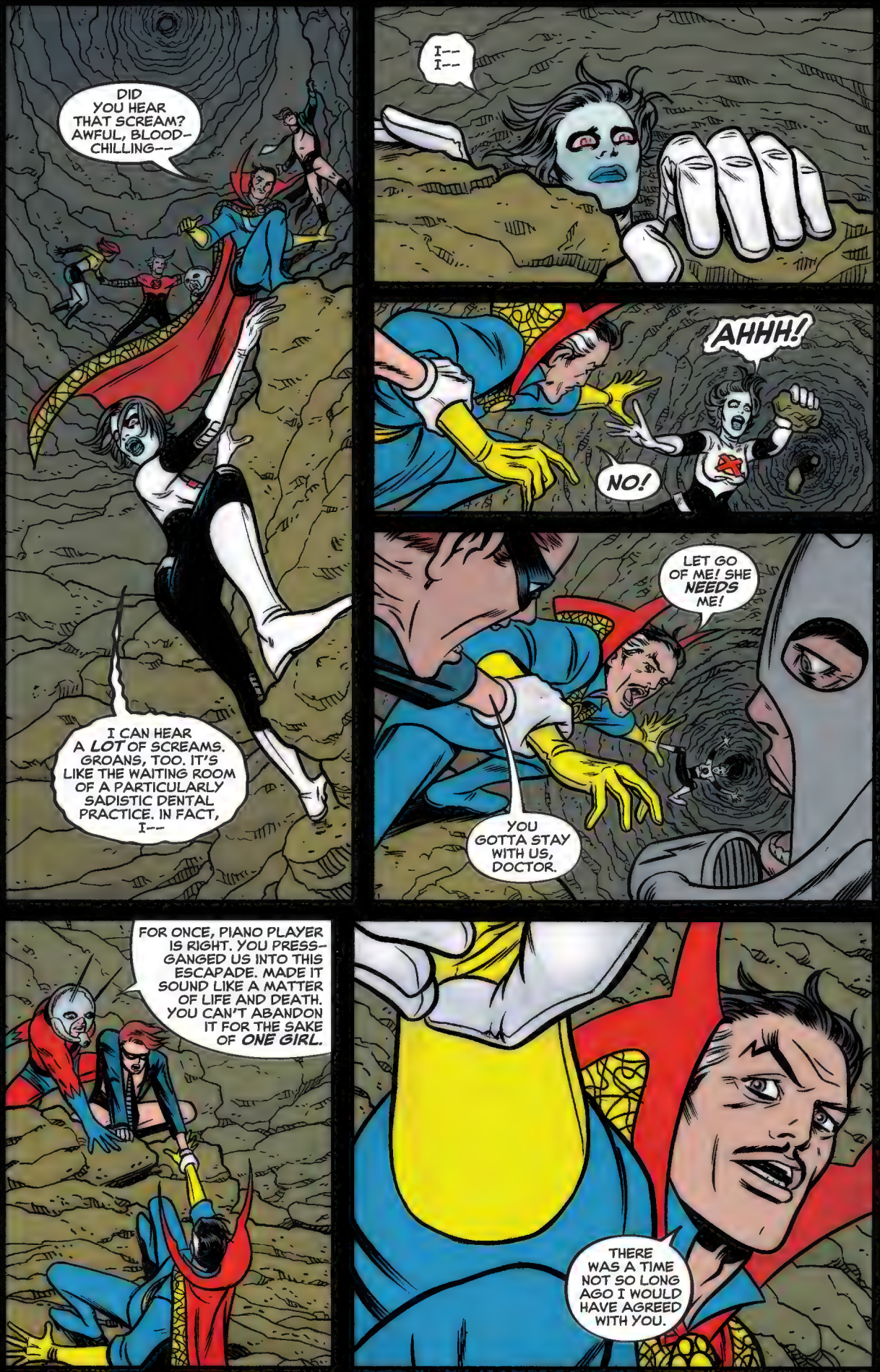
LOOK AT ME. STORY OF MY LIFE. DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT WHEN I WAS FIGHTING THOR AND I SLIPPED ON A BANANA SKIN?
YES. A NUMBER OF TIMES.
I'VE BROKEN THROUGH TWO PSYCHIC MEMBRANES OF THE SHIELD OF SERAPHIM. SOON STRANGE'S BODY WILL BE EXPOSED.
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME HELP OFF OF THERE?
NAH. THINK I'LL SLIP BACK TO HELL. MAKE SURE KRAVEN THE HUNTER HASN'T PICKED A FIGHT WITH SATAN.
SIMONS
ALL I GOT TO DO IS... CONCENTRATE ON SOME REALLY DEGENERATE EPISODE FROM MY PAST...AND MY LIFEFORCE...
...TAKES THE DOWN TRAIN...
I WILL TELL THE PITIFUL ONE!
GO AHEAD, MAN. I DON'T CARE.
NO FIGHTING, KIDS! WE SHOULD ALL BE SINGING FROM THE SAME TOMBSTONE HERE.

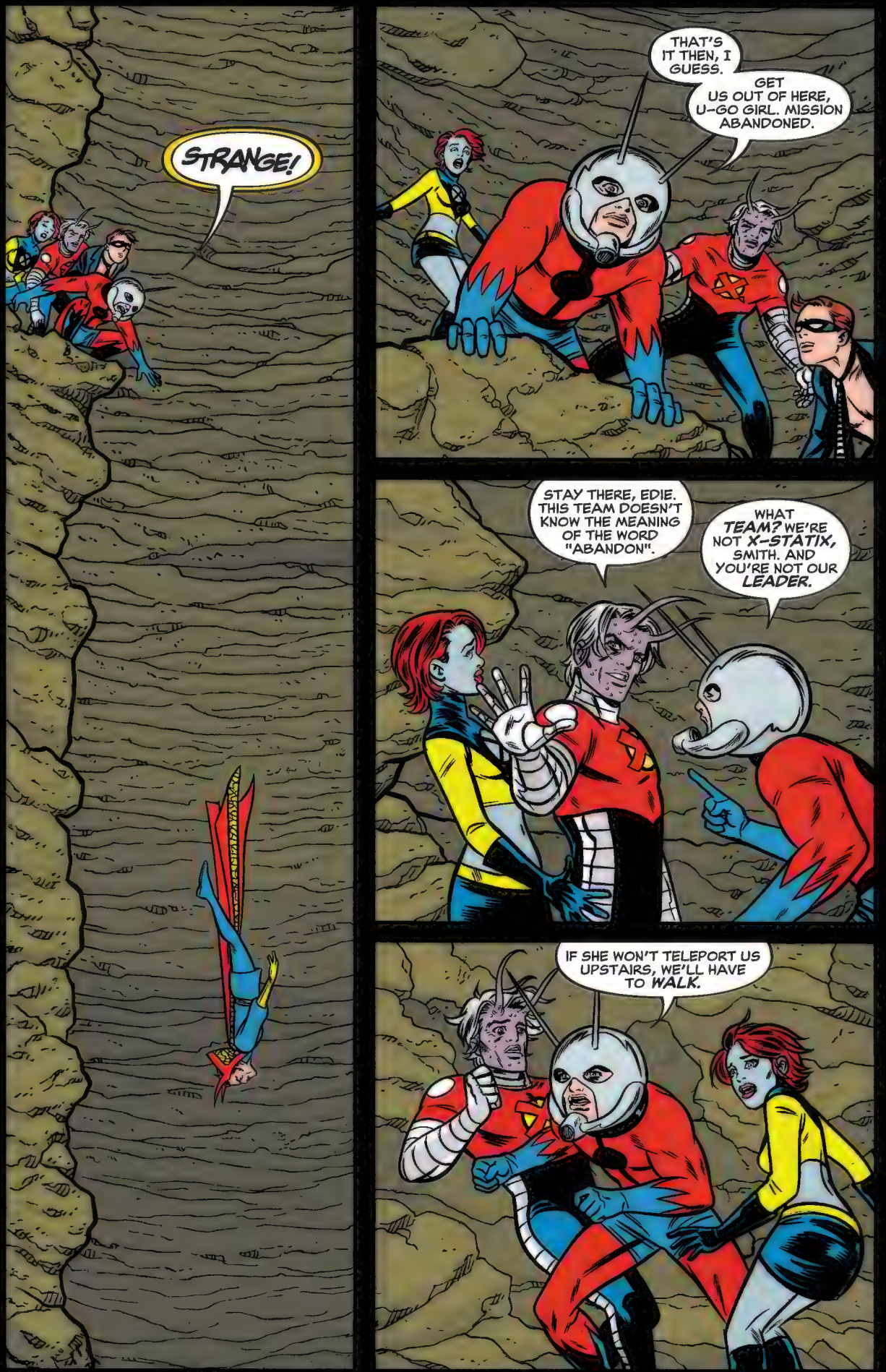
I ARRIVE TO FIND ANARCHIST AND MISS AMERICA CAVORTING. NOT GUARDING MYSTIC MUD.
THIS TRUE, ALICAR?
NONE OF YO' BUSINESS. I WANNA CAVORT, I CAVORT.
NOT WHEN YOU'RE WORKING FOR ME. IF YOU WANT A CHANCE OF BEING ALIVE AGAIN, YOU PLAY BY MY RULES, ALICAR.
TIKE, NO! DON'T DO IT!
BOTTLE IT ALL UP, THERE'S A GOOD BOY.
Oh NO! HE MUST HAVE HAD A REALLY EVIL THOUGHT! HE'S SLIPPING DOWN INTO A PRIVATE HELL!
DIRTY. DIRTY. DIRTY.

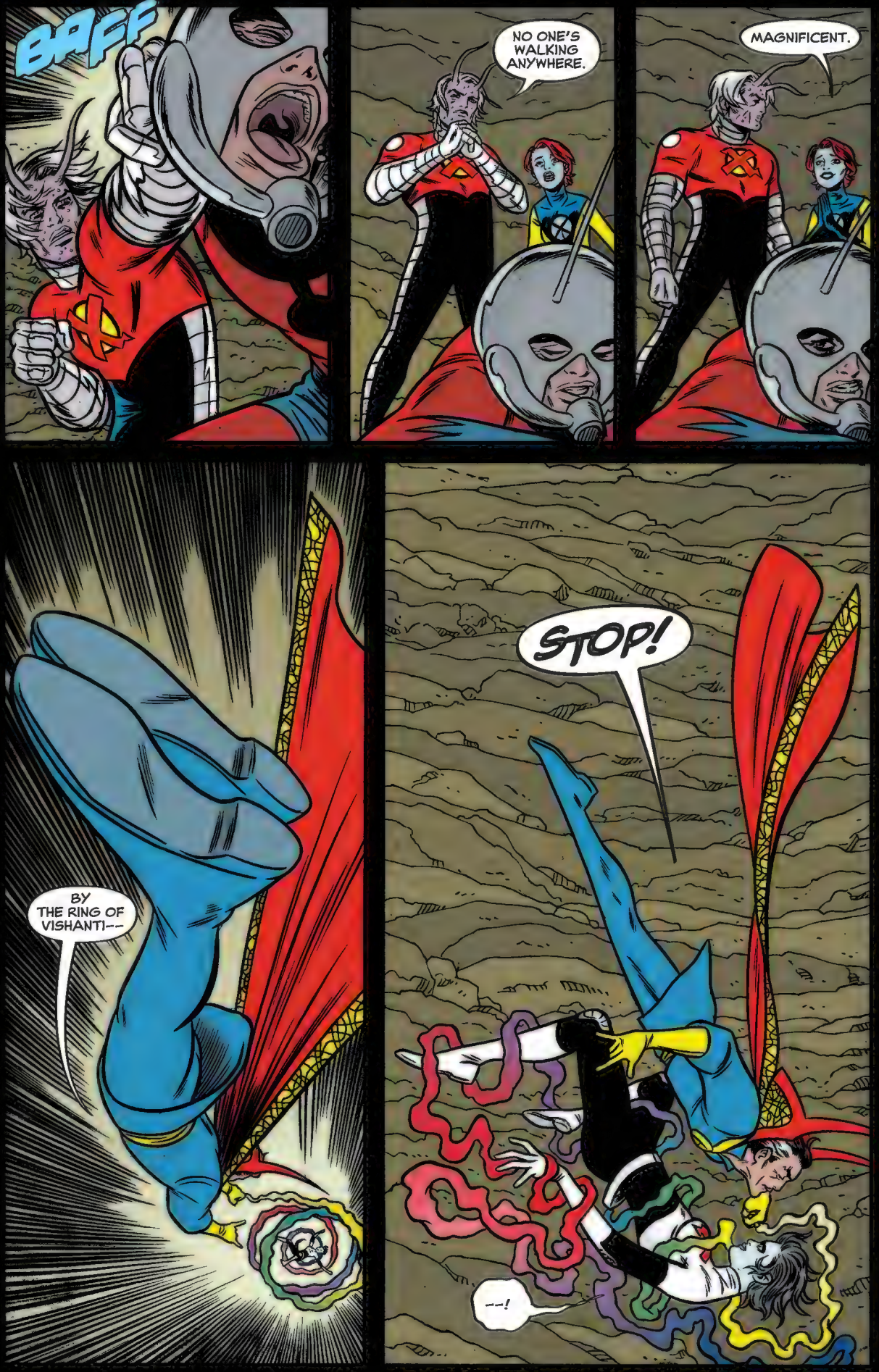
IT LOOKS SO DIRTY. AND SMELLS FOULER THAN OSHTUR'S INFAMOUS FLATULENCE.
IT'S CALLED THE STINKING OESOPHAGUS OF CERBERUS, STEPHEN. WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? THE PERFUMED GARDEN?
YOU CALLED ME STEPHEN.
ISN'T THAT YOUR NAME?
Y-YES. BUT I'M AT A DISADVANTAGE. I ONLY KNOW YOU AS DEAD GIRL. WHAT'S YOUR REAL NAME? WHO WERE YOU BEFORE YOU WERE--DEAD?
I'M SORRY. I'M JUST NOT READY TO TALK ABOUT THAT.
I COULD WEAVE AN ANCIENT SPELL THAT WOULD MAKE YOU TALK.
DO THAT AND WE WOULDN'T BE FRIENDS ANYMORE.
ARE WE GOING DOWN THIS THING OR NOT?

CAN'T YOU SIMPLY TELEPORT US DOWN TO HOTEL SELF-LOATHING?
TOO DANGEROUS. THIS IS DEEP HELL: IF I TRY TELEPORTING ANY LOWER IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW WHERE OUR MOLECULES MIGHT REASSEMBLE.
WE COULD END UP RIGHT IN THE DEVIL'S LAP.
SO THERE IS SUCH A THING AS THE DEVIL?
THERE ARE A LOT OF DEVILS.
WHETHER THERE'S THE DEVIL IS A MATTER OF THEOLOGY AND SEMANTICS.

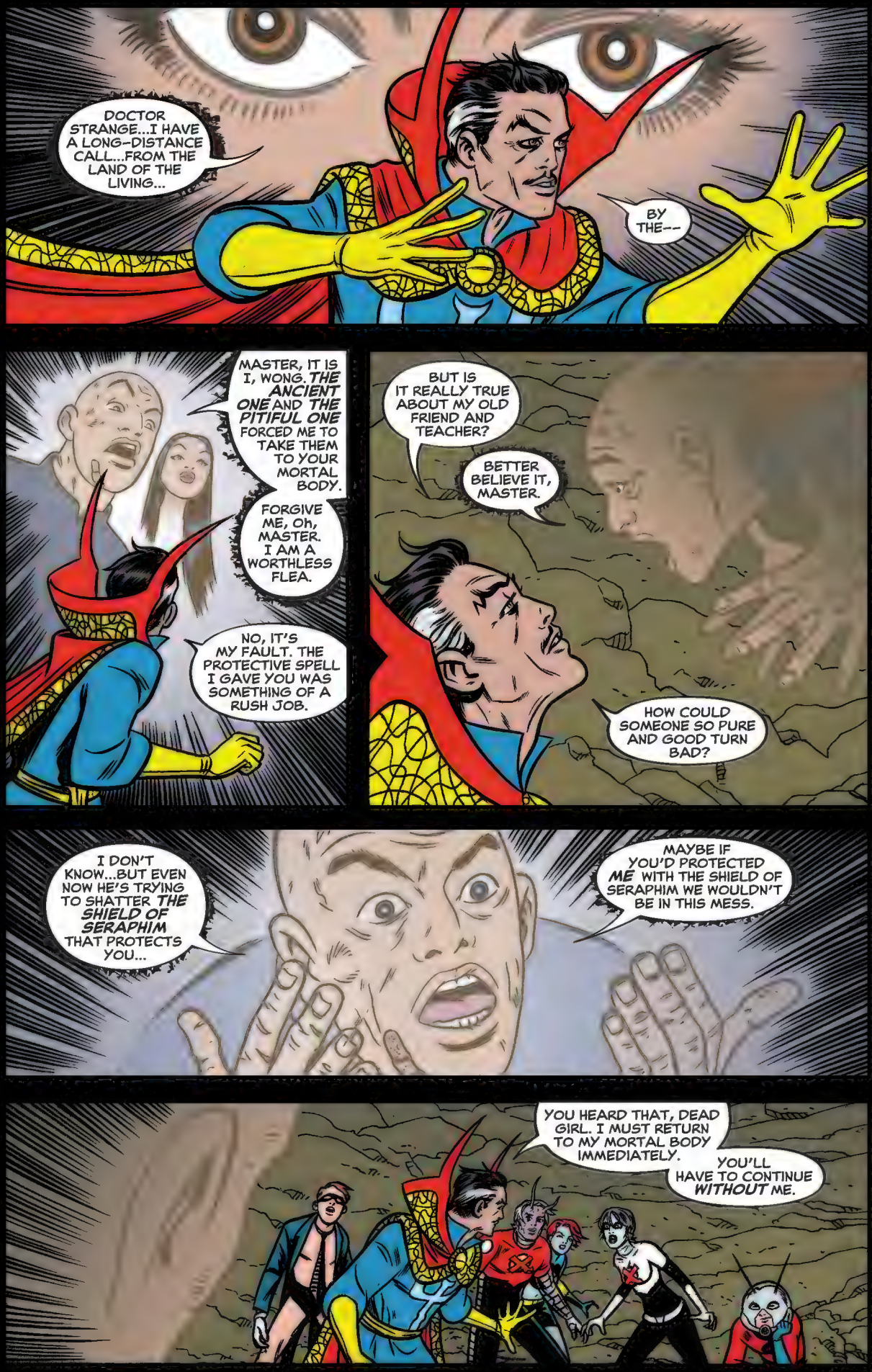

DIRTY, DIRTY, MY HANDS A-ARE SO DIRTY-- MUST...
...MUST GET CLEAN.
S-STILL DIRTY...S-SO DIRTY...
DOCTOR STRANGE AND HIS CREW COULD ARRIVE ANY MINUTE AND HE CHOOSES TO GO INTO PRIVATE HELL.
HE DIDN'T CHOOSE THIS. LOOK AT HIM. HE'S SUFFERING.
M-MUST GET...C-CLEAN. CLEAN G-GOOD... DIRTY...BAD...
MY WHOLE LIFE AS A SUPER-VILLAIN HAS BEEN ABOUT SUFFERING. COME ON, ALICAR, WAKE UP! SNAP OUT OF IT!
NO! WAKING HIM TOO SUDDENLY MIGHT TRAUMATIZE HIM.
I'M TRAUMATIZED. DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE TIME DAREDEVIL GAVE ME A TRIPLE HERNIA?
YES, YOU DID, AS A MATTER OF FACT.
Ahhh... whh... aaahh ahhh.


DID YOU HEAR THAT SCREAM? AWFUL, BLOOD-CHILLING--
I CAN HEAR A *LOT* OF SCREAMS. GROANS, TOO. IT'S LIKE THE WAITING ROOM OF A PARTICULARLY SADISTIC DENTAL PRACTICE. IN FACT, I--
I-- I--
AHHH!
NO!
LET GO OF ME! SHE *NEEDS* ME!
YOU GOTTA STAY WITH US, DOCTOR.
FOR ONCE, PIANO PLAYER IS RIGHT. YOU PRESS-GANGED US INTO THIS ESCAPADE. MADE IT SOUND LIKE A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH. YOU CAN'T ABANDON IT FOR THE SAKE OF *ONE GIRL.*
THERE WAS A TIME NOT SO LONG AGO I WOULD HAVE AGREED WITH YOU.


STRANGE!
THAT'S IT THEN, I GUESS.
GET US OUT OF HERE, U-GO GIRL. MISSION ABANDONED.
STAY THERE, EDIE. THIS TEAM DOESN'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD "ABANDON".
WHAT *TEAM?* WE'RE NOT *X-STATIX,* SMITH. AND YOU'RE NOT OUR *LEADER.*
IF SHE WON'T TELEPORT US UPSTAIRS, WE'LL HAVE TO *WALK.*


BAFF
NO ONE'S WALKING ANYWHERE.
MAGNIFICENT.
BY THE RING OF VISHANTI--
STOP!
--!

CHINATOWN.
--SO YOU MUST HELP ME. USE YOUR ARCANE POWERS TO SEND A MESSAGE FROM THIS WORLD TO THE DARK PLANE OF THE AFTERLIFE--
--WARN MY MASTER. TELL HIM WHAT THE ANCIENT ONE IS DOING TO HIS MORTAL BODY...
Ah!
I WONDERED IF YOU'D ALL STILL BE HERE.
YOU MEAN YOU THOUGHT WE'D RUN AWAY AS SOON AS YOU AND DEAD GIRL WERE GONE?
FORGIVE ME. I CLEARLY UNDERESTIMATED YOU. YOU MIGHT BE DEAD...
BUT YOU'RE STILL HEROES.
AGH-HEM


DOCTOR STRANGE...I HAVE A LONG-DISTANCE CALL...FROM THE LAND OF THE LIVING...
BY THE--
MASTER, IT IS I, WONG. THE ANCIENT ONE AND THE PITIFUL ONE FORCED ME TO TAKE THEM TO YOUR MORTAL BODY.
FORGIVE ME, Oh, MASTER. I AM A WORTHLESS FLEA.
NO, IT'S MY FAULT. THE PROTECTIVE SPELL I GAVE YOU WAS SOMETHING OF A RUSH JOB.
BUT IS IT REALLY TRUE ABOUT MY OLD FRIEND AND TEACHER?
BETTER BELIEVE IT, MASTER.
HOW COULD SOMEONE SO PURE AND GOOD TURN BAD?
I DON'T KNOW...BUT EVEN NOW HE'S TRYING TO SHATTER THE SHIELD OF SERAPHIM THAT PROTECTS YOU...
MAYBE IF YOU'D PROTECTED ME WITH THE SHIELD OF SERAPHIM WE WOULDN'T BE IN THIS MESS.
YOU HEARD THAT, DEAD GIRL. I MUST RETURN TO MY MORTAL BODY IMMEDIATELY.
YOU'LL HAVE TO CONTINUE WITHOUT ME.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO. STAY DOWN HERE WITH ME.
YOU MEAN--LET MY EARTHLY BODY DIE?
BEING DEAD HAS ITS COMPENSATIONS, STEPHEN.
IT IS DONE!
THE SHELL OF SERAPHIM IS BROKEN!
DOC!
IT--IT LOOKS LIKE THE DECISION'S BEEN TAKEN OUT OF MY HANDS, DEAD GIRL...
I THINK THE ANCIENT ONE JUST KILLED ME...
STEPHEN!
TO BE CONCLUDED!

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DEADGIRL

HOTEL SIMONS
MY PSYCHIC FINGERS WILL BURROW INTO YOUR VERY HEART, STEPHEN STRANGE.
UNLESS YOU RETURN I WILL DESTROY THE HOUSE OF YOUR LIFE FORCE...
...GIVING YOUR WANDERING SPIRIT NO HOME TO RETURN TO. FOR AS THE GODS DIE WHEN THE PEOPLE CEASE TO BELIEVE IN THEM...
...SO DOES A GREAT MAGICIAN PERISH...WHEN HE'S CARELESS ABOUT WHERE HE LEAVES HIS MORTAL BODY.
HELL. LOWER LEVEL.
STEPHEN, YOU'RE BREAKING MY HEART.
DON'T EXAGGERATE, DEAD GIRL. AND IF ANYONE'S HEART IS HURTING HERE IT'S--
--HHPp!
F-FAREWELL, DEAD GIRL, WHOSE FIRST NAME I STILL DO NOT KNOW...
IT'S MOONBEAM...

DEAD A LONG TIME PART FIVE

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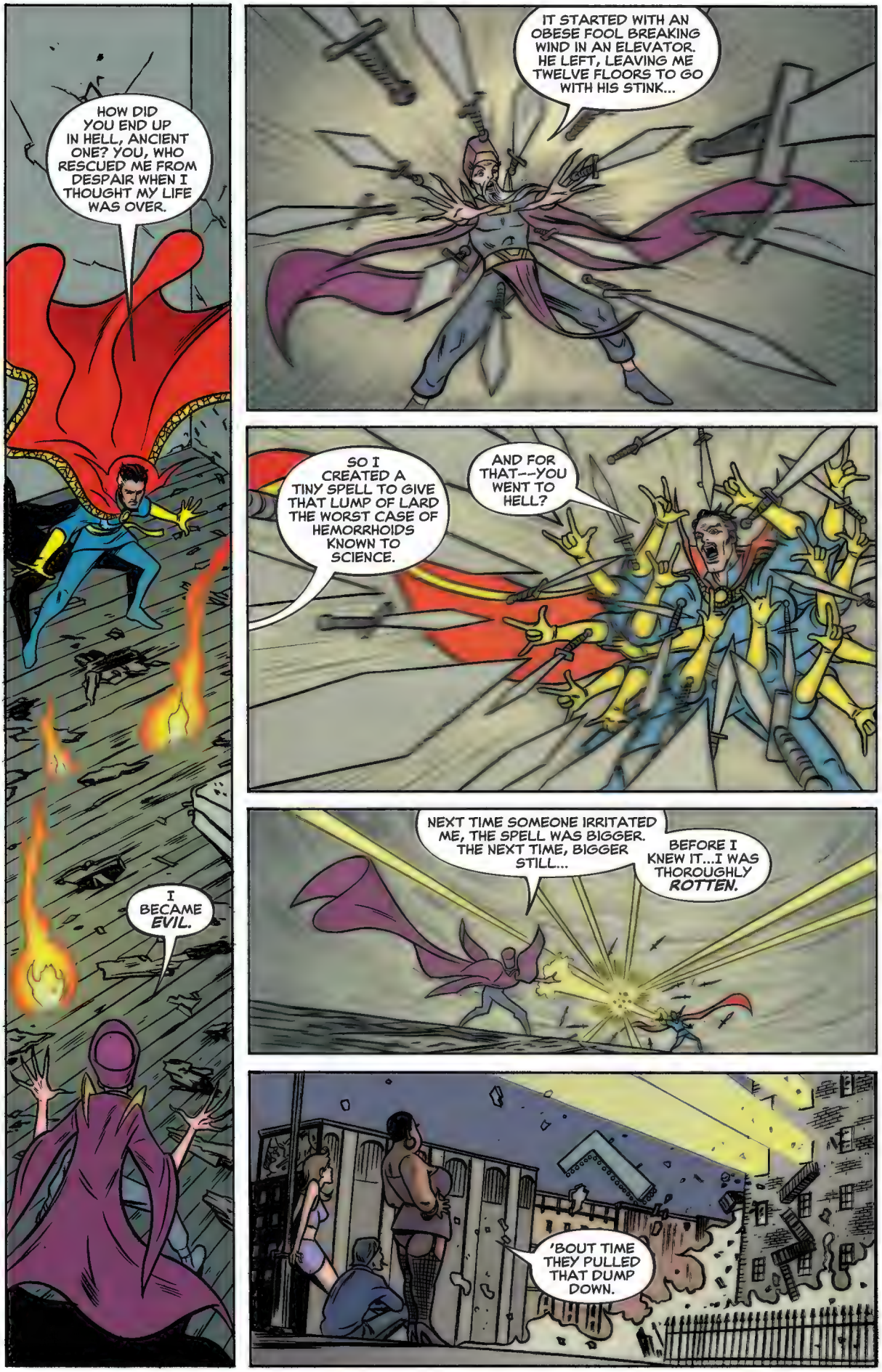
SHE'S RIGHT, EVERYONE. SO WHAT IF SHE'S GOT AN ABSURDLY INAPPROPRIATE NAME--THAT'S NO REASON TO STARE AT THE POOR GIRL.
GUY, THAT WAS VERY MASTERFUL.
WHAT I'M TRYING FOR IS... SENSITIVE...BUT STRONG.
IT MADE MY MOLECULES TINGLE.
I KNOW THIS WILD LITTLE DESERT ISLAND IN THE SEA OF HEAVENLY DREAMS WE COULD 'PORT TO... NOW THE DOCTOR'S GONE, THIS MISSION'S ALL BUT WASHED UP, ANYHOW...
I DON'T THINK SO, EDIE. NOT NOW.
BUT I THOUGHT THAT WAS WHAT YOU WANTED! I THOUGHT I WAS WHAT YOU WANTED!
IT IS. YOU ARE. BUT I WANT SOMEONE ELSE, TOO.
D-DEAD GIRL? YOU, ME AND DEAD GIRL? OKAY, I CAN GET MY HEAD AROUND THAT.
I MEAN-- I WANT ME. BEING WITH YOU HAS MADE ME REMEMBER WHO I USED TO BE. A LEADER. THE OLD ME WOULDN'T WALK AWAY FROM THIS MISSION UNTIL IT WAS DONE.
FOR PETE'S SAKE, SMITH. WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE SO COMPLEX?

I SUMMON YOU!
I COMMAND YOU TO USE YOUR MYSTIC SKILLS TO BESTOW THE GIFT OF LIFE ONTO ME--AND SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES AT PRESENT LANGUISHING IN HELL.
M-MASTER! Oh, ANCIENT ONE! S-SO IT IS REALLY YOU!
YOU OF ALL PEOPLE KNOW HOW LIFE IS TO BE BESTOWED TO THE DEAD--BY THE GHASTLY CEREMONY OF OSIRIS...
IT IS BEYOND WHAT I CAN ACHIEVE IN THE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS ALLOTED TO ME BY THE PITIFUL ONE'S CLAY...
AND THIS WAS INSPIRED BY ONE OF OUR RECENT PRESIDENTS...
...AN OCCULT BARRIER OF MYSTIC TEFLON FROM WHICH ALL EVIL ASSAULTS SLIDE!
INSTEAD, I WILL BATTER YOU INTO SUBMISSION SO YOU ARE A PUPPET OF MY WILL...
WE BEGIN WITH SOMETHING I PICKED UP FROM DREAD DORMAMMU!


HOW DID YOU END UP IN HELL, ANCIENT ONE? YOU, WHO RESCUED ME FROM DESPAIR WHEN I THOUGHT MY LIFE WAS OVER.
I BECAME EVIL.
IT STARTED WITH AN OBESE FOOL BREAKING WIND IN AN ELEVATOR. HE LEFT, LEAVING ME TWELVE FLOORS TO GO WITH HIS STINK...
SO I CREATED A TINY SPELL TO GIVE THAT LUMP OF LARD THE WORST CASE OF HEMORRHOIDS KNOWN TO SCIENCE.
AND FOR THAT--YOU WENT TO HELL?
NEXT TIME SOMEONE IRRITATED ME, THE SPELL WAS BIGGER. THE NEXT TIME, BIGGER STILL...
BEFORE I KNEW IT...I WAS THOROUGHLY ROTTEN.
'BOUT TIME THEY PULLED THAT DUMP DOWN.

HOTEL SELF-LOATHING. HELL.
WHAT KEEPS THE ANCIENT ONE?
RELAX, KRAVEN. HE'S GOT TO PERSUADE DOCTOR STRANGE TO BREAK SEVERAL LAWS OF PHYSICS AND RESURRECT US. THAT MIGHT TAKE A LITTLE WHILE.
THE ANCIENT ONE LOOKS KINDA FEEBLE. YOU SURE HE CAN HANDLE A DUDE LIKE DOCTOR STRANGE?
HE'S A TOUGH OLD BIRD. AND HE'S MASTER OF ALL KINDS OF WEIRD STUFF.
HANDS... CAN'T GET... MY HANDS... CLEAN...KEEP WASHING BUT...
I'M REALLY WORRIED ABOUT TIKE. HE'S BEEN IN HIS PRIVATE HELL FOR AGES. DO YOU THINK THIS HOTEL HAS A DOCTOR?
THIS IS DEEP HELL, BABY. THE ONLY DOCTORS 'ROUND HERE ARE THE ONES WHO POISONED THEIR PATIENTS. YOUR BOYFRIEND'LL BE FINE.
HE'S NOT MY BOY-FRIEND.
WE'LL PUT ON A LITTLE MORE EAU DU PROFUNDIS AND TAKE A TRIP TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING. SEE WHAT'S KEEPING THEM.
NO ONE'S TOUCHING THE EAU DU PROFUNDIS. AND NO ONE'S GOING ANYWHERE.
THE ANCIENT ONE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.

WE SEEM TO HAVE SHUNTED OURSELVES INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION.
HEMORRHOIDS?
...DID YOU SAY HEMORRHOIDS?
A-ah...
YOU FASHIONED A SPELL...TO GIVE A MAN HEMORR-HOIDS?
TELL ME, ANCIENT ONE!
C-CALM DOWN, STEPHEN. DIDN'T I TEACH YOU THAT A MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS MUST REMAIN CHILLED AT ALL TIMES?
GRRR!

IF'N THE SHERIFF'S DONE N' GONE I DON'T SEE WHY I SHOULD STAY WIT' THIS DURNED POSSE.
YOU STAY BECAUSE WE'VE COME THIS FAR AND WE'VE GOT TO FIND THE PITIFUL ONE AND HIS MAGIC POTION-- FOR THE DOCTOR'S SAKE.
IF YOU LEAVE NOW WON'T YOU FEEL LIKE THE MOST AWFUL QUITTER?
NOPE. DON'T RECKON I WILL.
LOOK'T THAT HORIZON. IT'S PERFECT.
CARTER!
REAL SORRY, MOONBEAM...
...BUT I ALWAYS DREAMED OF RIDING OFF INTO THE SUNSET.

IT'S NOT EVEN A PROPER SUNSET! THIS IS HELL, YOU DUMMY! IT'S A CRUEL OPTICAL ILLUSION!
HE CAN'T HEAR YOU.
HE DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR YOU.
IT SAYS A LOT FOR HIS INDOMITABLE FRONTIER SPIRIT THAT HE CAN FIND HAPPINESS IN THIS PLACE.
SAYS A LOT FOR HIS STUPIDITY.
MOONBEAM? IS THAT REALLY YOUR NAME?
Och, I THINK IT'S A LOVELY WEE NAME.
MY PARENTS WERE HIPPIES FROM BERKELEY.
I THINK IT SUCKS. PLEASE, LET'S KEEP IT AS DEAD GIRL.
COME ON, NEXT STOP HOTEL SELF-LOATHING. THAT'S WHERE YOU SAID THE PITIFUL ONE IS STAYING, RIGHT?

GIRLS? MOIRA? GWEN?
MOCKINGBIRD?
SORRY, DEAD GIRL. BUT ME AND THE GIRLS... WE THINK...
WE'VE DECIDED WE'VE BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH ALREADY.
FIGURE WE'VE FULFILLED OUR SIDE OF THE BARGAIN.
IT'S BEEN A GRAND ADVENTURE-- BUT WE HAVE A BOOK CLUB MEETING TOMORROW.
FUNNY HOW WE CLING TO TERMS LIKE TODAY AND TOMORROW, WHEN DAYS DON'T REALLY EXIST DOWN HERE. GUESS WE'D GO LOOPY IF WE DIDN'T.
DOROTHY PARKER IS DUE TO GIVE A TALK. WE'RE GOING TO OFFER HER HONORARY MEMBERSHIP IN THE DEAD SISTERS' CLUB.
BESIDES, THERE ARE NO REAL MEN LEFT DOWN HERE.
I THINK I'LL PLAY A VALEDICTORY TUNE TO MARK THE GIRLS' PARTING.
ANY REQUESTS?
YEAH, SHUT UP!

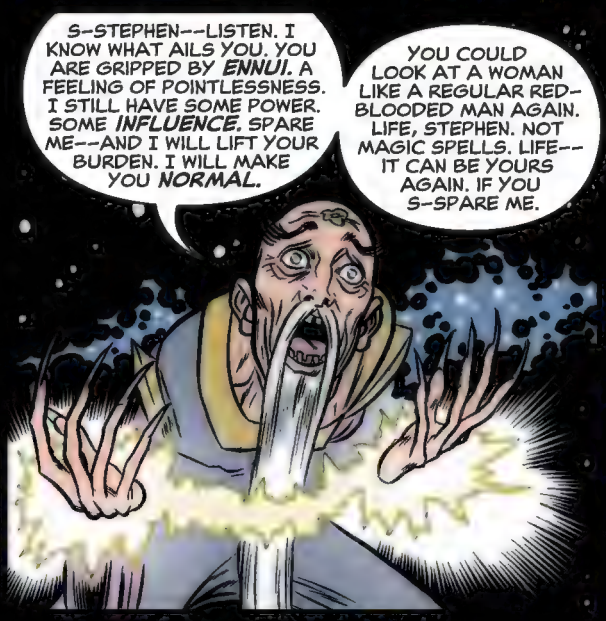
A-ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. I ADMIT IT. I PUT A SPELL ON YOU. I GAVE YOU THE LOW PAIN THAT DARES NOT SPEAK ITS NAME!
BUT... WHY?
YOU HAD BECOME SO FULL OF YOURSELF. SO HIGH AND MIGHTY! I IMAGINED AN OUTBREAK OF HEMORRHOIDS MIGHT CUT YOU DOWN TO SIZE.
WAIT! BY THE THIRD ARMPIT OF SVAAAR, I CAN SEE...SEE THAT THIS WASN'T JUST ABOUT CUTTING ME DOWN TO SIZE. YOU HAD BEGUN TO DESPISE ME. YES, THAT'S IT...
YOU BEGAN TO HATE ME. YOU HATED MY VIGOR. MY POWER...
...BUT MOST OF ALL, YOU HATED MY YOUTH.
Y-YOU ARE WISE BEYOND YOUR TENDER YEARS, STEPHEN.
'TIS TRUE--FOR A WHILE MY GREAT AGE BROUGHT WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE. BUT THEN-- A WORM OF ENVY ENTERED ME. A DEMON OF RESENTMENT GNAWED AT MY SPIRIT. UNTIL I BECAME WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU...
A BITTER, TWISTED OLD MAN.

W-WHAT WILL YOU DO TO ME NOW?
I'M ALREADY DEAD SO YOU CAN HARDLY KILL ME. SOON THE POWER OF THE *EAU DU PROFUNDIS* THAT SENT ME HERE WILL WEAKEN AND I'LL GO BACK TO HELL.

YOU ARE DEAD. BUT YOUR SPIRIT EXISTS. I COULD INVOKE THE TERRIBLE BABYLONIAN CURSE OF DISINTEGRATION. YOU TAUGHT ME THAT YOURSELF, ANCIENT ONE.

I COULD SHATTER YOUR SPIRIT SO THAT ITS FRAGMENTS SCATTER THROUGHOUT THE MANY DIMENSIONS. YOU WILL CEASE TO ***BE***. DEATH BEYOND DEATH. THE ULTIMATE OBLIVION. NO RETURN.

Ah. THE OLD BABYLONIAN CURSE. I'D RATHER HOPED YOU'D FORGOTTEN THAT ONE.
I AM DOCTOR STRANGE. I FORGET NOTHING.


S-STEPHEN--LISTEN. I KNOW WHAT AILS YOU. YOU ARE GRIPPED BY ***ENNUI***. A FEELING OF POINTLESSNESS. I STILL HAVE SOME POWER. SOME ***INFLUENCE***. SPARE ME--AND I WILL LIFT YOUR BURDEN. I WILL MAKE YOU ***NORMAL***.
YOU COULD LOOK AT A WOMAN LIKE A REGULAR RED-BLOODED MAN AGAIN. LIFE, STEPHEN. NOT MAGIC SPELLS. LIFE--IT CAN BE YOURS AGAIN. IF YOU S-SPARE ME.

WONDER HOW THE DOCTOR'S GETTING ON?
HOTEL SELF LOATHING
MAYBE HE'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT US AND WE'RE WASTING OUR TIME HERE.
THE DOCTOR? FORGET ABOUT US? NO WAY, GUY.
IT'S THIS CARPET THAT NEEDS A DOCTOR. I DON'T THINK IT'S BEEN CLEANED IN YEARS. WE'RE TALKING INFESTATION ON AN UNIMAGINABLE SCALE!
CAN YOU PLEASE SHUT UP ABOUT BUGS AND GERMS? YOUR INSANITY IS STARTING TO GRATE MY KEYBOARD, MAN!
MY INSANITY? I'M COMPLETELY SANE. IT'S EVERYONE ELSE THAT'S NUTS.
Oh! THE TIME-HONORED REFRAIN OF THE MENTALLY ECCENTRIC!
SCOTT! NO!
BAFF
OWW!

Y-YOU... YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT, A-ANT-MAN. YOU'LL BE SORRY.
Oh? WHADDYA GONNA DO, PIANO PLAYER? SING ME UNCONSCIOUS? SERENADE ME TO TEARS?
HE'S RIGHT, SCOTT. YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE HIT HIM. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE SAME SIDE.
B-BUT YOU HEARD HIM. HE SAID I WAS CRAZY. MENTALLY ECCENTRIC, HE CALLED ME.
WHAT?
13
WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT EACH OTHER LIKE THAT? YOU DON'T THINK I'M NUTS TOO, DO YOU?
OF COURSE THEY DO! EVERYONE DOES!
SHUT UP, SONG BOY.
IT ISN'T EASY BEING DEAD, SCOTT. YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST TO--TO SUFFER.

B-BUT-- THE BUGS. THE CARPET BUGS. THEY'RE REAL, AIN'T THEY?
THEY'RE VERY REAL, SCOTT. AND YOU'RE DOING A WONDERFUL JOB FIGHTING THEM.
WHAT SHE MEANS IS-- AT LEAST WHILE YOU'RE MESSING AROUND WITH BUGS YOU'RE NOT ATTACKING PEOPLE, LIKE A LOT OF YOU PSYCHOS DO.
AW, COME ON, MAN, THAT'S NOT NI--
--!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE PIANO PLAYER?
WHERE'S HE GOING? WHAT'S HAPPENING? THIS IS SCARY.
HE'S BEEN PROMOTED. THE STRANGE AND MYSTICAL LAW OF REBIRTH HAS MEANT THAT EVEN NOW THE PIANO PLAYER IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.
THE PIANO PLAYER? PROMOTED? HOW?
ACCORDING TO THE DOCTOR, ENOUGH PEOPLE IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING MUST WANT TO SEE HIM ALIVE AGAIN.
AND I'M STILL STUCK DOWN HERE? ME! ANT-MAN?
I WANT TO THROW UP.
I-I HEARD A NOISE. AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR. A TERRIBLE, BLOOD-CHILLING HOWL. ONLY ONE MAN I KNOW HOWLS LIKE THAT...

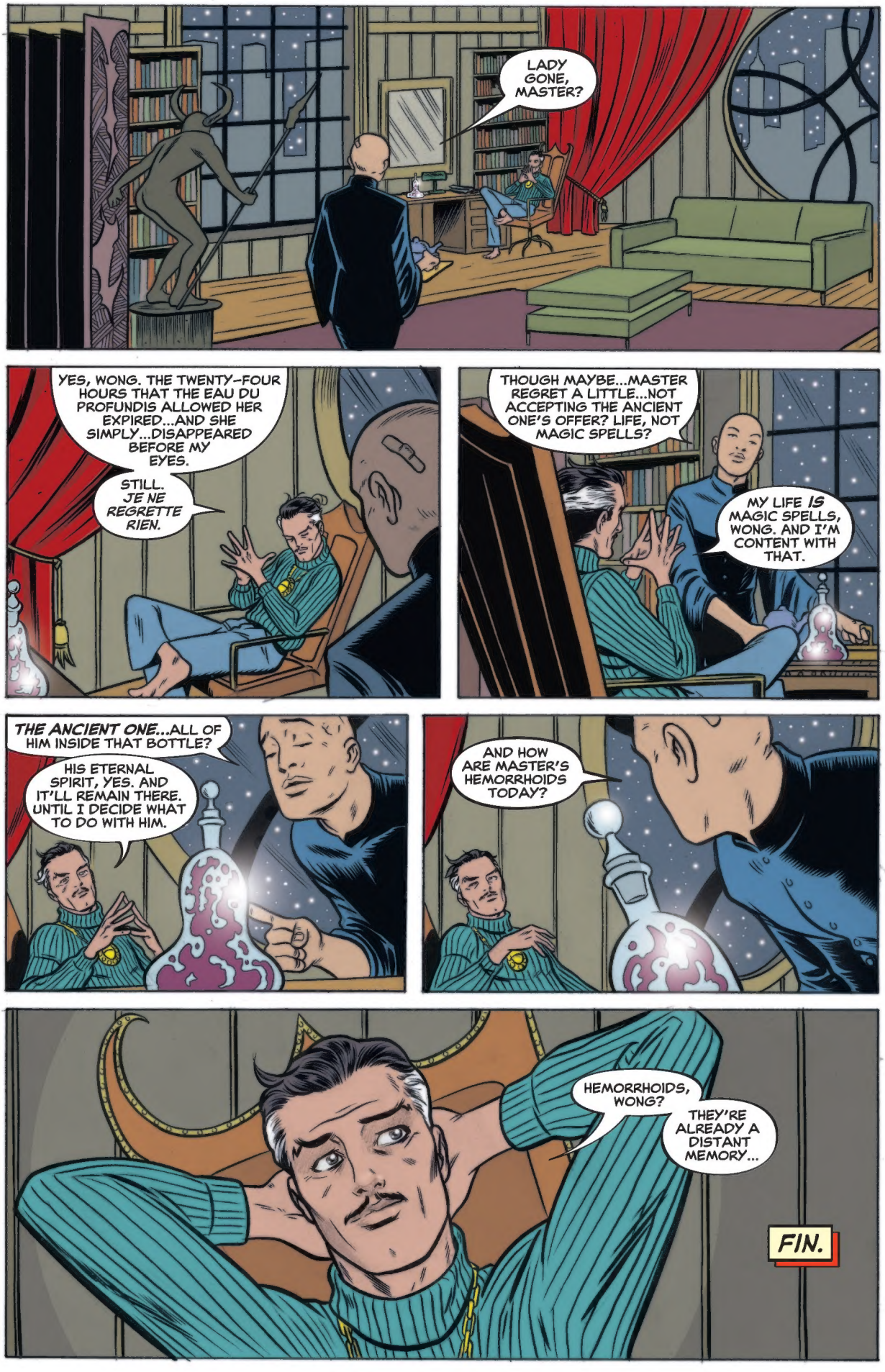
AAOOOOO!
TIKE! CALM DOWN! YOU'RE JUST COMING OUT OF YOUR HELL...
O-oh MAN! THAT WAS INTENSE!
IT CERTAINLY LOOKED IT. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT NOW?
OF COURSE HE'S ALL RIGHT. HIS OLD TEAM LEADER'S HERE.
HULLO, TIKE. NICE COMPANY YOU'RE KEEPING THESE DAYS.
MYSTERIO, KRAVEN, TAKE ANT-MAN. ALICAR AND MADELEINE CAN LOOK AFTER SENSITIVE.
AND WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING WHILE WE RISK WHAT'S LEFT OF OUR MORTAL SOULS?
I'LL HANDLE THE GIRLS.
YOU THINK.
DEAL WITH THIS CREEP, SISTER. I'LL HELP GUY WITH TIKE AND LIL' MISS STARS AND STRIPES.

TIKE! I'VE COME ALL THIS WAY TO FIND YOU-- YOU'RE NOT GOING TO *FIGHT* ME, ARE YOU?
OR ME? WE ALMOST HAD A THING GOING ONCE, REMEMBER?
DEAD GIRL, THERE AIN'T ROOM IN MY PO' BRAIN FOR ALL THE HONEYS I ALMOST HAD A "THING" WITH.
IS HE ALWAYS THIS FULL OF HIMSELF?
NEARLY ALWAYS.
MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOU ENDED UP IN HELL, BUDDY.
K-KRAVEN... MYSTERIO... WHERE...?
U-GO GIRL IS TELEPORTING THEM OUTTA HERE, PITIFUL ONE.
YOU'RE TOO EASY TO SQUASH. JUST LIKE A BUG.
--!

I DON'T LIKE 'PORTING THIS DEEP IN HELL BUT IT WAS WORTH IT TO GET RID OF THOSE TWO APES.
WHERE DID YOU TAKE THEM, EDIE?
NOT SURE. BUT IT WAS HOT. VERY, VERY HOT.
I'VE FOUND THE *EAU DU PROFUNDIS*. GUESS WE CAN ALL GO HOME AND WATCH TV NOW.
YOU COMING, TIKE? MISS AMERICA?
YO, DEAD GIRL... WHAT'D HAPPEN IF ME AND MISS AMERICA STARTED WALKING UPSTAIRS?
WELL...IT'S NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE, AND THE GODS OF THE UNDERWORLD WON'T LOOK KINDLY ON YOU TEAMING UP WITH THE PITIFUL ONE...
BUT WE SAW THE ERROR OF OUR WAYS. WE DIDN'T FIGHT YOU. SURELY THAT MUST COUNT FOR ***SOMETHING.***

I HOPE SO. FEELS LIKE I'VE HAD ENOUGH HELL FOR TWO LIFETIMES.
ME, TOO. I MEAN, I'M MISS AMERICA. I'M NOT EVEN PARTICULARLY BAD.
EXCEPT FOR MY ONE NAUGHTY LITTLE SECRET...
KEEP WALKING UPHILL...WITH ANY LUCK YOU'LL COME TO THE STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN.
THE MISSION'S COMPLETED, EDIE. NOW, WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT A WILD DESERT ISLAND?
SORRY, MR. SMITH, BUT YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE.
NOW YOU'RE JUST GONNA HAVE TO WAIT A LITTLE LONGER...
EDIE SAWYER. DEAD OR ALIVE...
...GUESS YOU'LL NEVER CHANGE.

DOCTOR STRANGE'S RESIDENCE. GREENWICH VILLAGE...
MOONBEAM?
I SPENT MOST OF MY CHILDHOOD TRYING TO FORGET IT.
I THINK IT BECOMES YOU.
THANK YOU AGAIN FOR BRINGING ME THE *EAU DU PROFUNDIS*. I WILL REST MORE EASILY ONCE I HAVE CONSIGNED IT TO NOTHINGNESS...
COULDN'T WE SAVE JUST A TINY BIT FOR OURSELVES? WE COULD HAVE THE OCCASIONAL WEEKEND TOGETHER. WHAT D'YOU SAY?
VERY TEMPTING. BUT I THINK IT'S BEST IF WE REMEMBER WHAT WE HAD TOGETHER. OUR LIVES TAKE DIFFERENT PATHS...OUR DESTINIES DO NOT LIE TOGETHER...
DO NOT LOOK SO SAD, MY MOONBEAM.
WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE THE STINKING OESOPHAGUS OF CERBERUS.


LADY GONE, MASTER?
YES, WONG. THE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS THAT THE EAU DU PROFUNDIS ALLOWED HER EXPIRED...AND SHE SIMPLY...DISAPPEARED BEFORE MY EYES.
STILL. JE NE REGRETTE RIEN.
THOUGH MAYBE...MASTER REGRET A LITTLE...NOT ACCEPTING THE ANCIENT ONE'S OFFER? LIFE, NOT MAGIC SPELLS?
MY LIFE IS MAGIC SPELLS, WONG. AND I'M CONTENT WITH THAT.
THE ANCIENT ONE...ALL OF HIM INSIDE THAT BOTTLE?
HIS ETERNAL SPIRIT, YES. AND IT'LL REMAIN THERE. UNTIL I DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH HIM.
AND HOW ARE MASTER'S HEMORRHOIDS TODAY?
HEMORRHOIDS, WONG?
THEY'RE ALREADY A DISTANT MEMORY...
FIN.

IT'S HARD TO KEEP A GOOD GIRL DOWN... ESPECIALLY WHEN SHE'S DEAD!

That's right, True Believers, hold onto your hats! After a brief hiatus caused by their, ahem, deaths, everyone's favorite mutants are back! And this time, they're bringing a host of... questions with them. Like why do some heroes and villains keep on dying, only to return from the dead? And why do other heroes and villains bite the bullet, only to remain dead? Who decides on this craziness? Is it some karmic wheel in the sky? Some fickle finger of fate? Or is it just some guy in the marketing department?

Well, one such deceased villain, named the Pitiful One, is going to find out. When the Pitiful One decides that he's tired of being dead, he assembles a posse of Marvel's deadest villains to attack the world of the living. And it's up to Doctor Strange to stop him and his evil cohorts, but he needs help from...well, you know. With Kraven the Hunter, Tike Alicar and a few other surprise, dead guests!

Collects *X-STATIX PRESENTS: DEAD GIRL #1-5* — by *X-STATIX* co-creators **PETER MILLIGAN** and **MIKE ALLRED**, and **NICK DRAGOTTA**.

MARVEL

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